

# LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## THE STANDINGS

BY JOHN STRANGE WINTER

*Author of "The Magic Wheel," "The Career of a Beauty," "The Other Man's Wife," "Bootles' Baby," etc.*

### I.

I WAS nineteen when I first met him. I was a very old nineteen. I think that I had always been old. You see, we were poor. I had never in all my life known what it was to have quite enough money, to have no worries. I had never known what it was to be young. As I take it, being young means being free from care; being like the kittens at play with their mother's tail; being like the little puppies that tumble over one another in joyous play; being like the children who knock out their shoes and their frocks, in happy faith that plenty more shoes and frocks are to be found where those came from.

No, I had never been young. My father died when I was about twelve years old. Of course, I remember him the most clearly of any of us. I remember so well his hectic, handsome, insouciant face, his easy, cheery faith in a future which never came true, and the pleasure which he took in a present that always partook more or less of the nature of a volcano.

"No, I never worry," he said one day when mother was reproaching him with his happy-go-lucky ways. "What's the good of worrying? Dear child, you worry enough for a dozen."

"I can't help worrying," said mother, "when I think—of four children—four pairs of boots and shoes, four sets of frocks, four sets of hats."

"Oh, my dear, want of faith; that's what's the matter with you—want of faith. Don't you remember the old woman at home that kept

the little shop at the corner? She had sixteen or seventeen children. 'Lor, Squire,' she said one day, when the governor was remonstrating with her for having such a large family,—'lor, Squire, God never sends a mouth but He sends bread to put into it.' Sensible woman! She got there all right."

"Yes, but she worked," said mother drily.

"Meaning that I don't. I suppose I don't—and, yet, I do." And then he gave a bit of a sigh and turned and looked at an unfinished picture on the easel with all his soul in his eyes. "My dear, that's the initial difference between your nature and mine. When I spend a month in front of a picture that has gone wrong you call that being idle. I call it the hardest work of a man's life."

"I am not reproaching you, Bertie," said my mother, "but most of your life is spent in that kind of hard work. In the meantime, boots and shoes wear out, frocks get short or torn, hats drop to pieces, and where are others coming from?"

"Oh, well, something will turn up. That old aunt will leave us a pot—or something, or I shall make the hit of the year. It will be all right, old lady. Stick to me a bit longer."

My mother's hand went swiftly out. "I hadn't any thought of not sticking to you, Bertie," she said in a tremulous voice. "I shall stick to you, as I shall stick to my children, as long as I am above ground; but, dear boy, if you would try to be a little more commonplace, you would sell so much better. If you would not always try to be painting masterpieces—— It is always touch and go whether they come off or not. I *know* you call them pot-boilers; I know it is degrading your art; I know everything that your looks would say. But the boots and shoes, Bertie, and the frocks and the hats, to say nothing of the bread and butter?"

"There—well—I will think about it. Yes, you are quite right. I have worn you out with my ambitions. I will turn over a new leaf. I'll paint some pot-boilers, old girl, nice little sketchy bits of nature, a stream, a cow, and a few primroses—things that will sell for a tenner. I could turn out three or four a week. Yes, you are quite right. It is not worth while working for fame when you have given hostages to fortune in the shape of four children. Pot-boilers it shall be, old girl. Here, let us have a drink. 'To the success of the future painter, Bertram Standing: The Pot-Boiler!'"

But my father never painted those pot-boilers. In one week from that time he was dead, lying under a white sheet, with a strange, beautiful dignity such as he had never worn in life.

"What will become of us?" said my mother. "What will be the end?" She never gave way. She made neither moan nor plaint beyond that one cry: "What will become of us? What will be the end?"

The house was dark, people came and went,—not many of them,—and I saw everybody. I had the same little parrot tale for each one: “No, mother cannot see anyone. She is not well. She does not feel equal to receiving visitors. You would like to see father? Oh, certainly! Shall I take you?” And then one after another of father’s pals would go into that quiet room and look at him as he lay there, so calm, so quiet, so icy cold.

It all fell upon me: the placing of the flowers, the thanks to each one, the excuses—everything. I did it all. And so three days went by until the evening before the day on which my father was to be carried out, feet first, to his long resting-place.

“Miss Joan,” said our handmaid, who was a good-natured, slipshod young person, well-meaning, but no more than that, “I’m sure you ought not to see any more people. You’ve been on the trot the ’ole of this blessed day. I shall go up and tell the mistress she ought to come down and see anyone else who comes, because it ain’t fit for you, a bit of a child, to have it all on your shoulders.”

“No, I don’t mind. There won’t be many more now, and mother cannot come. It’s not that she’s selfish, you know that; but the words won’t come; she can’t—she can’t put her sentences together, Hanna. She’d see people if it wasn’t for that. Don’t blame poor mother. You see, this is all so sudden.”

“Sudden or not sudden, Miss Joan, it’s awful ’ard for you. It ain’t fair. Do go and lie down, and let me see the next lot that come. I’m sure I don’t know what they want to come for. Staring out of curiosity!”

“Oh, no, they were father’s pals, and it comforts mother to think that they should bring such lovely flowers.”

“I dare say it does,” she said, “but let Miss Constance take a turn. She’s ten years old; she ought to be up to that.”

“No, mother depends upon me.”

“Oh lor, there’s another—knocking at the door like that with death in the ’ouse; perfect bothersome, I call it,” said Hanna, in a disgusted tone, as a hard ring resounded through the house and somebody at the door began to beat a regular tattoo upon the knocker. “Oh my darling, it is ’ard on you. There’s another of them come to worry the life out of you. Yes, yes, I’m coming,” she said impatiently as the person at the door began imperatively to knock again.

This was certainly not one of father’s pals. I listened, holding my breath, as Hanna went hurriedly along the narrow passage and flung open the door.

“Mrs. Standing live here?” inquired a harsh, imperative voice.

“Yes’m.”

“Is she in?”

"Yes'm, but I don't think she will see anyone."

"Not see anyone? Nonsense! She'll see me. Where is she?"

"Miss Joan is seeing visitors. Mrs. Standing is very poorly."

"If she is poorly, that will not prevent her seeing visitors," said the harsh, unsympathetic voice. "Where is Miss Joan? How old is Miss Joan?"

"Twelve years old. Please to step in."

I heard the door shut. Evidently this strange visitor had stepped in. Then I heard her feet coming along the passage and Hanna saying "In there, please'm." I instinctively backed against the wall as the visitor entered. I had never seen anything like her in my life before. She was a huge old woman, wearing an aggressive black front. Her chin was stubbly, her cheeks brick red, her eyes, seen through strongly magnifying spectacles, seemed to glare round like the eyes of a goblin. She was dressed in black,—rather handsome black,—with a great deal of fur about her. Over her arm she carried a black velvet bag with a silver clasp and a monogram.

"Ugh! What a desolate room!" she exclaimed. "Are you Joan—Joan Standing? You poor little fragment, come here and let me look at you."

I went forward and put my hand out. I confess that it shook visibly.

"Are you shy?"

"I don't think that I'm very shy, thank you," I said.

"H'm, I thought perhaps you were. Where is your mother?"

"Mother is in her bedroom. She's not well enough to receive anyone. I—I—can give her any message you like."

"I see. She puts it on to you, does she? Quite what I expected!"

"I don't know what you mean by 'putting it on' to me," I said. "Mother has been very ill these last few days. She didn't expect—none of us expected—that father was going to die. She hasn't slept since—or cried. She——"

"Well?"

"She can't think."

"So you think for her, do you?"

"As well as I can. She can't find the words. The doctor said if she didn't cry soon that—that—it would be worse."

"Did he? H'm! Well, go up and tell her that I'm here and that I want to see her, whether she can think or not. It doesn't in the least matter whether she can put words together or anything else. But I'm here and I'm going to see her."

I had always been a very obedient child. We had lived that kind of life. As children we always did what our father and mother asked



us to do—perhaps, for one reason, because they had never in their lives asked us to do anything unreasonable or without its being necessary. I turned at once towards the door.

"Stop!"

I turned back with the handle of the door in my hand. "Yes?"

"Do you know who I am?"

"No, I don't."

"I thought as much! Well, go and tell your mother that Aunt Margaret is downstairs. If she doesn't come, I shall come up to her. I'm accustomed to have my own way, and I intend to have my own way now. There, run along."

I flew up to my mother's room, panting. "Mother, mother," I said.

She turned her head slowly towards me. "Is that you, child?" putting out her hand. "Well, what is it?"

"There's a lady downstairs, mother. She says she must see you."

"I can't—I can't think. She will ask me about him. I don't know anything excepting that he is gone. Tell her—tell her I can't come."

"She says, dear, that she must and that she will see you, and I was to tell you that Aunt Margaret——"

My mother gave a scream. "Aunt Margaret in this house—downstairs! I—I——" And then words failed her. She burst into a dreadful fit of laughter. I thought she had gone mad.

"Oh mother, mother, don't—don't laugh like that."

"I'm not laughing. I'm——" And then, I don't know, but somehow she began to cry next, and as I was holding her head against my shoulder, trying to comfort her, I heard the sound of a heavy footstep on the stairs.

"Here, stand out of the way, child. Don't put yourself into a scare like that. Get me a glass of cold water and a sponge. Don't fuss. She'll be better for this. Come!"

She pushed me on one side and took hold of my mother's hand. "There," she said, and, somehow, the harsh voice became soft all at once,—“there, cry your heart out, my poor girl. It will do you all the good in the world.”

## II.

AFTER that Aunt Margaret pervaded the house. She went home every evening to sleep, because, as she said, she was old and fat, and didn't lie comfortably in a strange bed. She was very judicious with mother. Her kindness was like a tonic. When mother had cried herself into quietness, Aunt Margaret took her by the hand and drew her on to her feet.

"I was very angry with you," she said, "for running away with

Bertram Standing. I knew the marriage would not turn out well in a worldly sense,—and that's what parents and guardians have got to think of when young people want to go their own way,—but you made your bed and you have lain upon it. And now we'll go and see him together, and then we shall understand each other better. Come! I have never seen him since that last night when you wore your pretty pink ball-dress, and I warned you it would not do. It hasn't done, by the look of everything around you. Oh, you needn't tell me," she said, putting out her hand as mother opened her mouth to speak; "you've stuck to him, you've been fond of him to the very end, and that's as it should be; but by all accounts it's a poor end, my child. What are you going to do? How are you going to live? How many children are there?"

Mother gave a sort of gasp. "Four children, Aunt Margaret—four. I was saying to Bertie only two or three days ago, 'four sets of boots and shoes, four sets of frocks, four sets of hats!'"

"H'm," said Aunt Margaret significantly. "Well, he's dead. I suppose he might have been a great genius if he had lived. That's as may be. You're left with four of them to do the best you can. Will there be anything for you?"

"I don't know—not much. I have been trying to think, trying to plan it all out, but my brain won't work. The thoughts won't come—not the thoughts I want. I have been cogitating, wondering, thinking what I can do, and what they would do if anything happened to me."

"Yes, that would be a pretty kettle of fish," said Aunt Margaret in her driest tones. "However, nothing's going to happen to you at present. You're overworked and unstrung. You'll get over this after a time, and then we'll hitch up some plan or other. In the meantime, take me to see him. I'd like to bury the hatchet."

The strange pair—Aunt Margaret, so plain and so aggressive; mother, so beautiful and so simple—went hand in hand into the adjoining room, where Dad was lying. I followed them, but Aunt Margaret shut the door in my face; so I could only stand outside, wondering what they were saying.

I could hear mother sobbing wildly, and my aunt talking hard. Then, after a long, long time, my aunt opened the door again, and they came out together.

"No, not into that bedroom; that's the wrong room for you," said Aunt Margaret. Her tones had got back all their strident harshness. "You've been in that room three days. It's bad for you. It will force you back into yourself and make you think all sorts of dreadful things. Come downstairs and let me make you comfortable by the fire."

She slipped off her great fur-trimmed cloak, and untying her bonnet-strings threw them back over her shoulders. "Here, child, put my cloak on your mother's bed. Now, Madeleine, a cup of tea is what you want. I'll see that you have it in a jiffy."

She drew mother downstairs to the little dining-room. The one advantage of the house was that it boasted rather a large studio. The drawing-room, which looked out upon the road, was primly neat, as rooms are that are seldom used. We didn't have a fire there once a month, because, naturally, we were obliged to have one in the dining-room and the stove in the studio was always going.

Into the dining-room Aunt Margaret took mother, drawing the big chair up to the fire and putting a pillow behind her head.

"Now, just attend to one thing," she remarked in her bellowing kind of voice; "you've been accustomed all these years to being the main-spring of everything. Now, the main-spring has run down for a time, and I'll think for you until you are fit to think for yourself again. Let everything go. Joan and I will manage between us—you said your name was Joan, didn't you, child?—and with the help of that estimable young person who let me in we can run the house very well without you."

Then she went and rang the bell. It was a vigorous ring, and Hanna came scurrying up like a scared rabbit.

"You need not look frightened," said Aunt Margaret. "Nothing is the matter more than usual. Look here, I want you to get a cup of tea at once for Mrs. Standing. She's not feeling very well. Have you got the kettle on the boil?"

"Yes'm, it's on the boil now. It's been boiling ten minutes or more."

"Then it won't do to make tea with," said my aunt promptly. "You had better empty it—stay, I'll come down myself. Joan, come down with me. I'll teach you how to make a cup of tea, and that's a thing once learned never can be forgotten."

The other children were downstairs, Hanna having kept them with her in the kitchen, so that they might not disturb mother.

"Oh, they're down here, are they?" said Aunt Margaret. "It's a miserable dark hole of a kitchen. What do you say your name is? Oh, Hanna. A very nice name indeed. Hanna was a most estimable person. I hope you are the same."

"I've been here two and a half years'm," said Hanna, rather indignantly.

"I hope you'll stay two and a half years more, but you'll be worth your money when you have learned how to make a cup of tea. Now, pour that water away, or you can keep it for washing up. That little kettle—fill that. Tea should be made with water just on the boil.

Water that's been boiling hardens the tea and makes it unfit for human consumption. You understand that?"

"Yes'm."

"Well, I'll stay here until that water boils; then I'll show you how to make the tea. Put the teapot down. That's it. I see you know something. Now, who is this one?"

"This is Constance, Aunt Margaret."

I drew Constance forward. She was very pretty,—just like mother, —very slim, and shrinkingly shy.

"Do you know who I am?" Aunt Margaret demanded.

"No."

"I'm your Aunt Margaret. I was Aunt Margaret to your mother before you. I shall probably be Aunt Margaret to your children when you have any. I'm not a bad sort. I'm better than I look. I'm like the little dog whose bark is worse than his bite. We shall be friends by and by. You don't like the look of me now. Well, perhaps I shouldn't if I were you. What's this child called?"

"This is Gracie. Gracie is seven and a half," I replied.

"Seven and a half. Ah, you're like your father, just as you are, child," turning to me. "Not so shy as her sister. That's a good thing. And this small mite? Surely she's an afterthought!"

I didn't know what she meant by an afterthought, but I thought she wanted an explanation of Baby, and I at once gave it.

"Oh, this is Mona," I told her. "Mona is ever so much younger than Gracie. Mona is only just two. She doesn't know anything that's happened, you know, and she loves being down here with Hanna, and it keeps her from worrying mother."

"You are a queer little old-fashioned piece," said Aunt Margaret, looking at me—or, I should say, glaring at me—through her formidable glasses. "They say good mothers make good children. You've got a good mother, child. See that you always be a good girl to her."

I felt rather insulted. I didn't think that any behavior of mine warranted the little lecture, but, looking back from my present standpoint, I know that Aunt Margaret, under her grim exterior, treasured a kind heart, and that everything she said was meant tenderly.

So that dreary time went by—the dreadful day when they carried out a long box that they called father, the dreadful ceremony with lots of flowers and a great many sympathizing friends, the home-coming to find all the windows set open wide, and the make-believe cheerfulness spread over everything. It was a dreadful time! In the midst of it all, mother wept and asked us to forgive her if she had been a bad mother to us—she who had lived for us and for him who was gone!

Her words and her tears wrung my very heart. I think they made

Aunt Margaret feel sick. She was, therefore, gruffer than ever, more disagreeable, and, if possible, kinder. Consequently she did everything she could to spoil us, so that within a week shy Constance was hers, body and soul, and the other two would have done anything for her. Not that she came to live with us—oh, no. Aunt Margaret knew better than that. But, somehow, although she was not well off—I mean not rich—she made an arrangement with mother by which she had enough to keep the family and the house going.

We didn't move from the old house where my father had died. We stayed on there, and the studio was made into our every-day room. We called it the studio still. Father's pictures, even the unfinished ones, were still lying about on the easels, but it was our own room where we lived and enjoyed ourselves, while we suffered and sorrowed and played and loved and hated, according to disposition.

After that Aunt Margaret came a great deal to see us. "Such as I have it will be yours," I heard her say one day, "but, for mercy's sake, don't bring up your girls to be sickly sentimental. No good ever came out of that in this world. Joan has nothing of that kind about her; Connie has. There's something a little wrong about Connie, just as there is something a little wrong about you. Shake it out of her, my dear; shake it out of her."

But although mother honestly tried, she was never able to shake the diffidence and shrinking shyness out of Connie's nature. She was very pretty and very clever, though we all knew the gem of the family in the way of looks would be little Mona.

So we went on until I was nineteen, and then I met him.

I shall never forget that night. I had been invited to a dance—rather a smart affair—at the house of one of father's old friends, who had "arrived" since his death. He lived in a palace now in the Melbury Road, with a studio like a dream, an entrance that made one think of a harem, and a suite of rooms such as one sees in an exhibition. He had loved father, loved him as only painters love one another.

"You must come to Biddie's dance," he said to me a week or two before the great event. "It's her coming-out. She's never had a real flare-up. She's going to have one now. You must come and stay the night, and enjoy yourself to the full."

I smiled and thanked him. I said I would think about it. I meant I would think about my frock. That was a knot hard to unravel. I could not have a new frock, and my old one had seen too much service to be brought to the front again. I gave up all idea of going to Biddie MacFarlane's dance. Then Aunt Margaret came to the rescue, and, as she put it, stood me a frock—a pretty, white, fluffy thing that made me think of a Persian kitten, only I hadn't pink eyes. And at the ball I met him.

## III.

HE was everything but rich. We were made known to each other in the fewest possible words. "My dear Joan," said my chaperone, "pray let me introduce Mr. Stonor to you. He dances quite beautifully."

At any other time I think I should have said something to the effect that Mr. Stonor was a bold man to brave Fortune in asking me to dance. One look at him, however, was enough to freeze any gay words that might have risen to my lips. I felt shy, timid, gauche, utterly unlike the Joan Standing who was accustomed to command, direct, and control everything within her own sphere.

I very soon found out all that there was to know about Mr. Stonor, who was quite unlike the ordinary young man whom I was accustomed to see and to dance with. You understand that my way didn't lie among the smartest young men in London. The exquisite beings who parade Piccadilly and Bond Street, who have the latest slang at their finger-tips, who haunt the Gaiety, kill time in the Row, and are particular to a fault in the small details of their garments, were not thrown in my path. I knew a good many young men of sorts— young men articled to solicitors, a few reading for the bar, others immersed in journalism, some employed in the better banks, a few at Somerset House, and others in Government offices; but Philip Stonor was unlike any of these. He was an artist, and therefore appealed to me as no other man in any other profession could possibly have done.

He was not at all the same kind of artist that my poor father had been. His line was black and white, his aims and ambitions were immense. His was already a known name.

We talked a great deal about art that evening. I told him all about my father, and what ambitions I had had myself in the way of art, how I had gone for years to a little art-school in Lambeth where I had grubbed along, feeling I was learning little or nothing, hopeless of ever being able to make a mark on that great world which has so many devotees, that world in which there are so few prizes and so many blanks.

"You must let me come and look over your things," he remarked, holding my white satin fan and fanning me with steady, vigorous strokes. "You look to me as if you had the regular artistic temperament, the regular painting temperament, and you're in earnest, which can be said of very few people nowadays. So many want to succeed without working, so many want the prizes without the toil, and it isn't to be done. Art is a hard mistress; she gives her favors lavishly, but she exacts so much in return."



"You're a worker yourself," I said, looking up at him.

"Yes, I have always worked hard. I had my doubts about coming here to-night because of the waste of time, but I owe MacFarlane a good turn, and he exacted the promise from me that I would come. I never go to tea-parties and things of that kind. I haven't got the time to spare."

"Then you won't have time to come and see my feeble attempts," I remarked. I had my eyes bent upon my fan, but I felt that he was looking at me.

"You're a fellow-worker," he said with quick reproach. "That's not waste of time, as it is trotting round from one tea-party to another, listening to inanities of 'Oh Mr. Stonor, I saw that delightful sketch of yours in *Black and White* last week.' I never think it's worth while saying that I never did a stroke for *Black and White* in my life. I say, 'Did you? I'm glad you liked it. Most kind of you.' And then she simpers and I simper, and we go away and pretend that we are mutually pleased. Life under those circumstances is a sad business, a very sad business, Miss Standing."

He did come to see me the very next afternoon, and I took him into father's studio and showed him all my sketches. I showed him father's unfinished canvases, over which he lingered with an admiration that in itself would have been enough to win my heart.

"Clever work," he said, "clever, clever work, but impracticable. That's the kind of stuff that makes art, but never money."

I knew it so well, but the quick recognition of it went home to my heart as nothing else could have done. Oh, he was such a man, so much in earnest, yet so full of fun; so deferential to mother, poor, pretty, broken, enfeebled mother, and nice to little Mona, who attended a school in the neighborhood, not being strong enough to go to a boarding-school, as did the other two.

"I may come again?" he said to mother when he took leave.

"Why, surely," said mother, "whenever you like. Joan asks whom she likes to the house; it's all the same to me—at least, I mean," she added, pulling herself up quickly,—"I don't mean anything unkind by that, Mr. Stonor, but I don't mind having my girls' friends here. It's a pleasure to me and to them. You like Joan's work?" she inquired.

"I think it very clever," he said, "far above the ordinary run."

"I'm glad of that. Joan is such a good girl, such a worker, so honest and straightforward and independent, my right hand of them all, but I don't know about art. My husband was a genius. He shared the fate of nine geniuses out of ten. I hope Joan isn't a genius."

"No, she's not a genius, but she's a clever artist. She ought to do well, she ought to make money, and she will, if I can help her."

## The Standings

After that he came again and again, dropping in casually at all hours, taking us as he found us, coming into the studio when I was at work, correcting me here, pointing out a possible improvement there, treating me *en camarade*, as if I had been a brother instead of a sister of the brush. And I—well, I may as well own up first as last that I was overwhelmingly, hopelessly, entirely in love with him!

At that time we were not hopelessly straightened. We were poor, you understand, but we were not poverty-stricken, and between the two states there is a great difference. Aunt Margaret had turned up trumps, and she gave mother enough every week to live upon in decency and comfort, nay, more—in turn she sent us all to school. I happened to go to a boarding-school along with Connie. Then, when I left and took up my work in the art-school, Gracie took my place beside Connie. Soon Connie would leave, and little Mona would in her turn leave home and begin the serious part of her education.

It must have been a great strain upon the old lady's resources, but she was cheerful and uncomplaining. She never worried us with the fact that we were beholden to her. She was our good fairy without always playing up to the part.

Still, although it might have been worse, it was a dull and restricted life. My mother's enfeebled health, our lack of money, the hopelessness of ever rising, either socially or in a pecuniary sense, all tended to press us down into a narrow groove. And to this Philip Stonor came, like a ray of sunshine, like a breath of mountain air, like a draught of water to a thirsty soul! Can you wonder that I fell down and worshipped him? I would have cut off my right hand to please him. Oh, he represented the beginning and end of life to me!

It was perfectly natural, and yet, woman like, I hid all my love carefully away in my heart. I hid it under an air of camaraderie. I schooled myself to meet his eyes frankly and without any sign of that gentle shame which is the portion of a woman who loves. I nerved myself to feel no tremor when his hand touched mine, as it often did when we were painting together in the studio. I could not prevent my heart going bounding along in great, sick throbs when he first approached me, but that didn't matter, for nobody knew what was in my heart excepting myself.

He went away for Christmas. I think I told you that I met him in the late summer weather. That year he spent his holidays in Scotland with his own people. Then there came the long, lovely autumn, when he came most days to our house, and we worked side by side, almost as if we had been fellow-students in one of the great Parisian ateliers. Then the holidays drew near, and he went off to stay with his own people again.

"I shall be away a fortnight," he said to me. He was busy, paint-

ing a little sketch of me as a Christmas present for mother. Oh, yes, although he was a black-and-white artist, he could paint in oils, and his ambition lay towards the Academy and the higher prizes which the artistic life holds out to those who run the course. "Turn your head a little that way—so. Don't move. I have got the poise of your head to perfection. You must give me an hour to-morrow or I shall not get this sketch done, and I am most anxious to do it because your mother has been so nice to me. You don't think she suspects?"

"Not in the least. She hasn't the faintest notion that you are doing more than advising me."

"It is going to be a good likeness," he went on presently; "but it is easy to paint a portrait when one's heart is in the work."

For a moment my whole being seemed to stand still. My hands grasped the arms of the big chair in which I was sitting. I stared straight in front of me, scarce able to believe the evidence of my own ears.

"What did you say?" I asked.

"I said—— Oh Joan, don't you understand what I said?"

In a moment he had flung down his palette and brushes on to a little table which stood beside the easel. Then he rushed over to my chair and caught hold of my hands.

"Joan, Joan, don't you understand? You deserve a better fate than I can offer you. You ought to queen it with someone who can lay the very world at your feet. Do you understand," he went on, speaking quite roughly, "that I am asking you to wait an indefinite time, that I am asking you to give up the best years of your life for a future that is indefinite—almost hopeless?"

"But, if you want me——" I said.

"If I want you! Oh darling!"

#### IV.

I WENT the next day and told Aunt Margaret what had happened to me. I thought she might have been kinder.

"It isn't much of a match, my child," she remarked. "If I were a young girl again, I'd send every fellow packing that wanted me to wait more than three months. Long engagements are a mistake. I know. I've been there. I should not be Margaret Phloxley this day if I had had an aunt to give me such good and disinterested advice as I am giving you this minute. I have no doubt he is a very good and virtuous young man, and that he is clever in his profession. They all are. I'd like better a profession that gave a regular income. Queer thing that all the girls of my family should go the same way. First myself, then your poor mother, now you, and I suppose your three sisters will take after you."

"Not you, Aunt Margaret?"

"Not I? I wasted ten golden years over a lover who was too clever to make his way in the world. He got tired in the end. He said he loved me more than ever, but he left me to wither on the virgin thorn to marry a widow, old enough to be his mother, with three thousand a year. He said I was so sweet and good that I should be sure to marry somebody else. Well, I didn't. I had had enough of men, and I just stayed Margaret Phloxley to this day. Then there was your poor mother, the prettiest creature that I ever beheld in my life. She threw herself away—— Well, well, he was your father, child. I won't say anything to upset you, but you must remember enough to know that your poor father never was, we'll call it, a good match for your mother. Now, there's you, the third generation. How long does this young gallant propose that you should wait for him?"

"Oh auntie, I don't know. We haven't spoken of that. We're to be married sometime."

"Sometime, my dear, is no time. Get the day fixed. Don't marry on nothing, as your father and mother did. That's foolish. Get the day fixed, and work up to it."

"I really can't, Aunt Margaret; I can't do that. Philip loves me and I love him, and that's all I think or care about. We're young. I'm only nineteen."

"And how old is your precious Philip?"

"Philip is three-and-twenty."

"Young enough to change his mind, young enough to change his mind half-a-dozen times over. My poor child, I'm sorry I cannot congratulate you. Oh, he's good-looking,—I've no word to say against his looks or his manners,—but his means. Dear, dear, dear, to think that there should be a third in the direct line!"

I thought that it wasn't exactly in the direct line, but it was no use saying anything; so, instead of arguing the point, I sidled across to Aunt Margaret and put my arm round her neck.

"Aunt Margaret, do you remember the first day you came to our house, when poor father was lying dead and mother was nearly out of her mind?"

"I remember something about it," she said gruffly.

"You said then, dear, that you were like the little dog whose bark was worse than his bite. You won't say unkind things to Philip, will you?"

"I—I shall not say anything too civil to your Philip, I promise you."

"You may say what you like to me, Aunt Margaret, but not to Philip, because he's such a worker. He's not like poor father, who was always working hard at nothing—you know what I mean,—no,

Philip isn't like that. He works hard all the time. It won't do to take the heart out of him, will it?"

"I don't know at all. I know that you—you are witch enough to charm the heart out of a stone. There, go away with you. I suppose I must give you a wedding-present and pretend that I like your choice, but I don't, mind you,—I don't."

I went home satisfied enough. "What does Aunt Margaret say?" mother demanded as soon as I entered the dining-room where she was sitting.

"Oh, you know what Aunt Margaret is like. She was characteristic of herself. She scolded and petted me in the same breath; said, first of all, she would have nothing to do with it; then said she would give me a wedding-present and pretend that she liked the match. She's all right, mother; don't worry about her."

The following day my two sisters came home from their school, Connie quite a grown-up young lady, looking almost as old as I did and the image of mother; Gracie more like me, and, of course, like our father, with a mane of hair flowing far below her waist, and a pair of gray eyes in which two little imps of mischief were always lurking. They accepted the new member of the family with the unquestioning ease of very young people.

"It's delightful to have you engaged," said Connie.

"How soon are you going to be married?" asked Gracie.

"Oh, not yet awhile. There's no hurry," I replied. How I disliked that question, and it seemed to be the one that rose first to everyone's lips! I suppose it was natural enough, after all.

"When is he coming?" Connie went on.

"Not yet; he's gone home. He's gone away for a fortnight."

"Gone home—and just engaged to you!"

"Well, there was a reason for that. He had a portrait to paint in the neighborhood where his people live. Must think of ways and means, you know, dear."

"Ah, yes," said Connie with a sigh. "We've always got to think of ways and means, haven't we? I wish you'd got engaged to a rich man."

"So do I, because I wish Philip was rich; but when you see him you will understand my preferring to get engaged to him anyhow, rich or poor."

"Oh, it's beautiful to feel like that," cried Connie.

"What's your engagement-ring like?" asked Gracie. "Oh, three pearls! Pearls mean tears."

"Nonsense! How silly you are! As if the stones of a ring that you buy could make any difference to your luck! How can you be so silly?"

"Then he has actually gone away? We sha'n't see him for a fortnight?"

"No, not for a fortnight. Then you'll see more than enough of him."

I did wish that Philip could have been there to be seen by my sisters, although they were only school-girls. However, he wrote to me every day. At Christmas he sent me a delightful present—a beautiful collar of beaten silver, which fitted round my throat and made a lovely finish to whatever gown I was wearing.

"That doesn't look very poor," said Connie.

"Oh, well, Philip isn't poverty-stricken. I never said that he was, but poor as he looks at it—poor to be married."

It was a few days after this that Connie talked to me seriously about our mother. As she had always done, she shared my bedroom, and when we were brushing our hair before getting into bed was the time when we gave each other all our confidences.

"Joan," she said to me suddenly one night, "mother is frightfully altered."

"Mother?"

"Yes, frightfully. Don't you see it?"

"No."

"Ah, I suppose that's because you live with her. They say that outsiders see most of the game. Mother is going downhill fast. She's so old, so feeble. She might be ninety both in mind and body."

"But mother's quite young."

"Yes, I know. She's quite young in years, but all the same she's failing fast. Has Aunt Margaret said anything to you?"

"Not a word."

"Don't you notice," Connie went on, "that mother never starts a conversation now? She agrees with anything that you say. Don't you see that she never does anything of her own ideas? She's quite unlike herself. I believe," she went on, dropping her voice, "that mother never got over those awful few days when father died. If you remember, the doctor said then that, if something didn't happen to break up the calm, she might lose her reason?"

"Well, something did happen, but her mind has never been the same since. I will talk to Aunt Margaret about it," I said. "Something might be done to arouse her. It would be dreadful if she were to get into a state of having no will power. I never thought of it until you spoke just now about it, but she does sit for hours in the same attitude, and she does agree with what one says. Sometimes she will take the other side, but not very often. Oh Connie, what a dreadful thing for us if our mother went out of her mind!"

"That she will never do," said Connie decidedly. "It seems to



me as if her mind is gradually going out of her, which is a very different thing. Ask Aunt Margaret. Ask Dr. Bryde; perhaps he can suggest something to rouse her out of herself."

I did speak to Aunt Margaret, and also to Dr. Bryde, who had attended us ever since I could remember anything. Aunt Margaret said that she saw no difference in mother whatever. Dr. Bryde put his hand on my shoulder and looked at me sorrowfully for a minute or so.

"My poor little Joan," he said, "you must remember this: that trials in this world mostly come one at a time. Your mother has no suffering. She never will suffer more than she does now."

A great gloom came over me, and I looked anxiously up at him.

"Dr. Bryde, do you mean to tell me that our mother—my mother—is going to be——"

"I think that your mother has never got over the shock of your father's death," he said very kindly. "Hers is one of the natures that brood. She's not the power of throwing off trouble and worry, as your father had. For instance, if she had happened to die in the same way that your father did, he would have sat down and cried for a week, and then he would have got over it. Nobody knows the value of tears excepting those to whom tears are a luxury denied."

## V.

DURING the six months that followed we gradually came to think of our mother as of some dear, irresponsible child. She became an entire cipher in her own house. Aunt Margaret handed over the money she had allowed mother to me, and I did the best that I could with it. The girls' school-bills she paid herself. What little money mother had of her own—it wasn't very much—I used to get her to sign cheques for at stated times. She asked no questions, volunteered no advice, scarcely spoke, but all day long sat with her hands folded before her, acquiescing in whatever we chose to do. Poor mother! It was a sad life; it was a sad end to a life of anxious industry. I was thankful that she didn't suffer.

During those holidays I found that my sister Connie had an ambition.

"I shall never realize it, Joan," she said one evening when we were sitting by the dining-room fire, mother and the children having gone to bed, "but you might speak to Aunt Margaret and get her to consent to my trying."

"To your trying what?"

"I want to go on the stage."

"My dear child, every girl wants to go on the stage."

"I suppose we all of us do more or less, but mine is no sudden fancy. I've had it in my mind for years."

"And you—are seventeen," I said.

"I knew you would say that. I am seventeen, but I'm one hundred and seventeen in determination. I've got it in me, Joan, just as your Philip has got it in him to do black and white, just as you've got it in you to paint."

"I don't think that my painting is likely to do me much good."

"I don't know—you make money. After all, that's the test. But I don't care whether I make money or not. I want to act; I want to sway people. Think of having a great audience hanging on the words that fall from your lips! Think of the power——"

"Yes. Think of a great audience laughing at you!"

"They will never laugh at me," said Connie; "I've got it here," laying her hand upon her breast.

"Well, I'll talk to Aunt Margaret. She's a wide-minded sort of person. She may think it very laudable of you to want to work, and work hard, because that's what it means."

I did speak to Aunt Margaret. She said she had never heard such tomfoolery in her life; that Connie must be mad, and that I must be worse to encourage her.

"I haven't encouraged her, Aunt Margaret," I said; "quite the contrary. Indeed, I suggested some awful situations to Connie, who is entirely proof against them. She smote her breast and said she had got it there—there."

"Then you didn't sympathize with her?"

"I don't know. I don't know anything about the stage. I never wanted to go on the stage myself; I never had the time to think about it. I don't see why Connie should not have a predilection that way, or a talent. She's very pretty, she's very clever. She's a curious, mystic, sensitive nature. She might get to the very top of the tree."

"What's your idea?" said Aunt Margaret, her tone brushing aside the poesy of my remarks.

"My idea is that it would be better to let her try. I have always thought it a dreadful thing to force a round peg into a square hole, or a square peg into a round hole. It's a dreadful thing to make a person with an artistic temperament run along a groove of pure domesticity or of commercialism. It's going against nature, for inborn art is nature."

"Well, I should never have thought of putting it that way," said Aunt Margaret, "but then, you see, I'm a very commonplace person. I have suffered all my life, child, from being the square peg in the round hole, and I should like to say this much: if I help Connie to try and make a fool of herself on the stage——"

"Or the other thing," I put in.

"Or the other thing," said Aunt Margaret, "I don't feel competent

to show her the right way to get there, and it's no use starting out unless you know the way to get there, either in that profession or any other."

"Perhaps Philip might know."

"Oh, I dare say your Philip will know."

"He knows most things. His work takes him a great deal among actors," I ventured to hint.

"Of course it does. His work takes him a great deal among very queer places, I've no doubt. Look here, Joan, take my advice: before you marry Philip, exact a promise from him that he will never become a Freemason."

"Never become a Freemason! Why not?" I was so astonished that I sat and stared at my aunt as if she had suddenly taken leave of her senses.

"Well, Philip's work and the queer places that it takes him to will be quite excuse enough for him to have liberty to keep away from home. Don't let Freemasonry be added to it."

"I thought that Freemasons did such a lot of good?"

"Fudge! They're supposed to. Freemasonry is supposed to be a high ritual, tending only to good. They're supposed to have marvelous charities and to cultivate the milk of human kindness. The unhappiest wives I have known," said Aunt Margaret, dropping her voice several tones lower, "have been the wives of Freemasons. Never as a wife stand anything which will shut you out of a portion of your husband's life. You can't follow your husband to his lodge, and so the hours that are spent in following the high ritual and attending to wonderful charities are blank so far as you are concerned. They are a part of your husband's life into which you cannot enter and about which you may ask no questions. You must accept them as inevitable. Never do it my dear girl. Tell Philip now that he is never to become a Freemason; if he does, you'll break off your engagement with him."

"But if it is to advance his worldly interests——"

"Nonsense! Freemasonry never advanced the worldly interests of anybody. It's ruined many a home, broken many a woman's heart. Freemasonry may be all right in itself, but Freemasonry has been made the cloak of many and many an intrigue which has ended in sorrow and desolation."

What a curious nature Aunt Margaret had—so practical, so full of common-sense, and yet so curiously sentimental on some points. I thought there was something in what she said, and I sounded Philip on the point the very next time he came to see me.

"You're not a Freemason, are you, Philip?" I said.

"A Freemason? No. I have thought of being one. The fellows have asked me—— Oh, well, they're not supposed ever to ask any-

body to join, but they have put it to me rather strongly that it would be a good thing if I were one."

"I shouldn't like you to be a Freemason."

"Why not?"

"Well—I shouldn't. You won't be getting made a Freemason without speaking to me, will you?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"Well, don't. I'd rather you didn't. I would rather you never became a Freemason."

"Then that's quite enough. I never will. But what's put that into your head?"

"Oh, a talk I had with Aunt Margaret for one thing, and as her ideas jumped with mine it crystallized them, and I told you what I thought. That was all."

Philip laughed. "My darling, I would do a great deal more than that for you. It's nothing to me to give up something that I have never desired or wished or even had an inclination to go in for."

"And if you had?—I mean, if you had an inclination?"

"I would give up anything you asked me to just the same."

"Philip, would you do something else for me?"

"If I can, of course I will."

"Connie wants to go on the stage." He whistled a long, low whistle, indicative of great astonishment. "Well, it's no use asking poor mother,—she'll say yes, if I tell her that it's all right,—but Miss Phloxley—Aunt Margaret. I've got her consent, and she will help Connie in every way that is necessary so far as she can; only, as she herself says, she knows so little. She suggested that perhaps you might be able——"

"I? My dear child, it's an awfully difficult thing to get on the stage."

"But if one has talent?"

"If one has talent, the way becomes much easier. But how are we to know that Connie has talent?"

"She says that she has it here," laying my hand on my breast.

"My dearest child, every young woman that lives has a feeling that she has it there. If it isn't for the stage, it's for art; if it isn't for art, it's for music; if it isn't for music—well, it's for something else; but they've all got it—mostly for the stage."

"She seems determined."

"All the better for her. Well, I'll see what I can do. I know one or two big-wigs. I might be able to get her an introduction. At all events, I'll try. There's one thing, however, I must say first," and he caught hold of my hands and drew them against his breast, looking down at me with anxious eyes. "You'll never blame me if anything

should go wrong? Mind you, I'm not one of those people who regard the stage as a sink of iniquity; who think because a girl chooses to follow a dramatic career that she must be damned henceforth and is incapable of good or virtue. No; but I can't pretend that it is not a life of temptation, a hard and wearing life, a life of disappointment, a life in which all is not what it seems to be. If she has really the gift, she will surmount all those trials, she will attain her heart's desire, she will get there, she will 'arrive.' But if her belief should prove to be only fancy, she will break her heart. Anyhow, I'll do what I can to help her forward, only remember you must not hold me responsible nor blame me for what may happen in the future."

"I never will," I said earnestly. "I shall never blame you for anything."

His arm stole round me, and he lifted my chin so that he could look right into my eyes. "Isn't that rather a tall order? Isn't that rather going beyond the possible? Do you love me so much?"

"Yes," I said, "I love you just so much."

"Will you always love me as much as that?"

"Yes, always."

"You are sure of it?"

"Oh, yes, certain of it. I could never feel any differently towards you. You may change towards me. That is not at all unlikely if all I hear of men be true."

"Joan," he said, with a sudden change of tone, "I want you to do something for me. Let us be married at once."

"We can't."

"Why not?"

"We must wait a little time. It would drag you down, for one thing."

"Oh, I don't think so. It would give me an incentive to work, to get on. I work fairly well as it is, but not as I should do if I had a wife to keep me up to it, to encourage me every day, every hour."

"We said that we would wait until you were making at least five hundred pounds a year."

"That's a modest enough ambition," he said, smiling at me, "but I am now making enough to keep us. Why should we wait? Why should I stand any longer outside the door of paradise when I might as well be within? You are not afraid of poverty?"

"I have been used to poverty all my life. I have never known anything else. We live on so little here, less than ever since father died, and we were always poor before—at least, we were poor one day and well off the next. He never would husband a penny. It's not poverty I'm afraid of, but I feel that I ought not to go away just now. It's the most critical time for them all—mother so helpless, sweet

darling that she is, and so unable to give the children that protection which is their natural due; Connie has only just left school, and she's not like me, she knows nothing of the house, nothing of management. I have always done everything for her, just as I have for Mona. Could I turn my back upon them all? I could not let you come here to live, —you could not work,—it would be wrong of me. No, Philip, much as I long to come to you, I must ask you to wait a little while longer."

## VI.

PHILIP didn't let the grass grow under his feet where Connie's interests were concerned. It was, as he explained at the outset, a bad time of year to start a young girl on her dramatic career. Managers were all played out with the heat, and most of them either on tour in the provinces or enjoying a well-earned holiday away from London.

"There's not a chance before September," he said to me one day, when talking over the situation. "Lavender has promised to see her when he comes back, but I haven't much hope that Lavender will be any good. He gets hundreds of applications every week, and it's but one in a thousand that he can give a billet to. Still, he could tell from an interview whether it would be any good, her going on or not."

"She's so pretty," I said.

"Yes, she's pretty," said Philip shortly, "but beauty isn't everything on the stage. It's only the outsider who thinks that. You can make stage beauty; you can't make an actress."

"When will Lavender be back, Philip?"

"Oh, not till the end of September. He opens on the 29th."

"A new piece?"

"Yes. That's all filled up ages since."

"Then what's the good of taking her to see him?"

"Well, Lavender sets the seal upon everybody. Lavender knows. If he thinks she's worth looking at, he'll give her a place to walk on in a crowd. If she satisfies Lavender, any other manager will give her a trial. You don't understand, my dearest, how curious a world the profession is."

But Philip did better for Connie than take her to Lavender, the great acting-manager, who stood at the head of the theatrical profession, whose word in all such matters was law. Before another week had gone by he had arranged an interview for her with one Tregarth, one of the most romantic actors of the day,—a man young, dashing, brilliant, who seemed for the moment to have the whole world at his feet. Even Philip was excited when he brought the news.

"I've got news for you, Connie," he said when he came in. "Tregarth will see you at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. I'll take you



up there and introduce you to him. He'll ask you to do something, and you must do it without any tremor, without any hesitation, simply and naturally, without any airs and graces. You understand what I mean?"

"Perfectly," said Connie. "Oh Philip, I do thank you so much. How lovely it is to have a brother-in-law like you!"

"I'm not your brother-in-law yet," he said, "but, at the same time, anything that I can do I will, and be glad to do it. You think that you have confidence in yourself?"

"Oh, I know I have. I tell you I have got it—here—here."

"Yes; but you mustn't keep it there. You must put it out, you know."

Connie smiled. How lovely she was when she smiled—lovelier even than our mother had been, which was saying a good deal.

"I shall not fail you, Philip. You shall not be ashamed of having introduced me to Mr. Tregarth. All I want is a chance, an opportunity, and then dear old Joan and you will both be proud of me, see if you aren't. Oh, for a chance—a chance to show the world what I can do, to show the world what there is in me!"

"Well, if all else fail," said Philip rather brusquely, "you'll be able to make a decent living as a painter's model."

She flashed an indignant glance at him. "A painter's model! Philip, I'm astonished at you. I——" And then she turned and rushed out of the room.

"Oh Philip, you shouldn't have said that."

"Why not?" He turned upon me almost harshly. "It's a very decent calling. She's very pretty. Many painters would be glad to give her big terms to get that mystic expression, her coloring, her features, her slim, willowy figure. Don't tell me. I know what I'm talking about."

"Yes, dear, I know; of course you know what you are talking about. But she has a higher ambition. You don't want to daunt her at the outset?"

"No, of course I don't. I'm only too anxious she should get on."

"But it wasn't very kind of you to even hint at failure. You don't want to be unkind to my sister, do you?"

"Unkind? No!" He caught hold of me quite fiercely. "You love me, don't you?" he said roughly.

"Oh Philip, you know that I do. You know that I adore you, live for you and only for you. Why put this question to me? It's not—it's—oh, I haven't deserved that you should speak to me like that."

"No, I know you haven't, I know it. But when you suggest my being unkind to Connie when all the time I'm trying to help her for you—for you, Joan, only for you——"

He broke off short and looked at me with such a strange expression in his eyes that I was puzzled and a little frightened.

"I don't know why you should take this tone. It isn't like you. What do you mean? What is there in the background? I have said nothing that need upset you. You were not very kind to Connie, and she's all on fire with the idea that she's going to set the world on fire."

"Perhaps she won't, perhaps she'll be disappointed, perhaps things will go wrong with her. Oh, I wish I hadn't touched it!"

"Philip, what do you mean?"

"Mean? Nothing! I've got a foreboding, an idea that something's going to happen, something that will disturb everything. I wish she had not taken this fancy to go on the stage. It's a cruel life, it's a hard life, it's a will-o'-the-wisp to avoid. People who try to follow it never get there, they never attain their ideal. She would be adored as a painter's model, believe me. However, I have done my best. I have seen Lavender, I've seen Tregarth, and ever so many others, but those two are willing to give her an interview and talk things over with her, see if there is anything in her, and so on. Remember, you promised that whatever happened you would never blame me."

"I promised. I will keep my promise. Only give the child her desire. That's all I ask."

Well, the following morning he came for Connie, about half-past ten. I knew that it was most inconvenient to him. I knew that it meant giving up the greater part of his morning's work,—well, practically all his morning's work,—but I didn't grudge it, and I'm sure he didn't either. He took her to the theatre in a cab. Yes, it was an extravagance. Our house was in the dingiest part of Chelsea,—a quaint old house, with a bit of garden at the back of the studio,—so that a cab-ride down to the Strand was an extravagance; but, as Philip said, it wouldn't do to take a smart young lady who aspired to play the lead to the theatre in a humble bus.

She did look so pretty that bright summer morning! She was dressed in white—a simple white frock, a thing that washed and was new every other week, with a big white hat on her charming head, and a whole fire of eagerness glowing in her lovely eyes.

I cast my shoe after them for luck, and turned back into the house with a sob in my throat and a throb at my heart. Why, I did not know. "If only she is lucky, poor child! Her heart is so set upon it, and there's nobody here to encourage her. Poor mother doesn't know any more what effort means, and I have given up my ambitions. My only ambition now is to be a perfect wife to Philip."

I could not sit idle; I felt that I must get to work, that I must do something. So I sat by the drawing-room window, because there I could see the people coming along the street. I knew that I

should have a long time to wait—two hours or more. Well, there was the big basket of mending,—stockings, buttons to put on, tapes to renew,—the usual family basket where there are five people to be stitched for.

And so I sat there sewing industriously, and mother, poor mother, wandered in and out aimlessly, as was her wont. I was busily darning a pair of long-legged stockings belonging to Gracie when my two younger sisters came in.

"Oh Joan!" cried Gracie, "Mona and I want to go down to see Dorothy Peach."

"Does she expect you?"

"Yes, dear; she asked us yesterday if we could go down to lunch and then to the Exhibition with her. You don't mind, do you, darling?"

"Not a bit. You will want money for your bus fare?"

"If you don't mind, yes. Sixpence will be ample. Mrs. Peach is going to take us to the Exhibition. She told us so."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure, dearest. You won't mind our going? I'll take great care of Mona. We're going right away now. Good-by."

They were gone like a flash of light, two pretty, winsome creatures, still so young as to have no cares.

I watched them in their butcher-blue frocks and their wide sailor hats go down the street to the corner where they would get their bus, and then I darned for dear life.

Gradually the pile of stockings diminished, as I disposed of them one by one, and then I set to work upon the white things that wanted buttons and tapes. Those too disappeared, and I began a bit of smart fancy work before I saw the two for whom I was watching come round the corner in a hansom.

"Oh, here they are!"

The cab drove up with a dash to the door, and Philip jumped out. One glance at my sister's face was enough to tell me that their errand had been in vain. Philip paid the cabman and followed Connie quickly into the house. I jumped up from my seat.

"Connie, what has happened?"

She looked at me with a world of tragedy in her lovely eyes. "It's no good," she said. "All my hopes dashed to the ground! Oh Philip, Philip, why did you take me to that horrid man?"

"My dear, there are plenty of other managers in the world."

"No, he's dashed every hope I had to the ground, killed all the artist in me, murdered my hopes. I wish I were dead!"

I ran towards her. "Oh Connie, Connie, don't talk such nonsense. If one blow knocks you down, you're not fit for a career that's half

disappointment and all pain. You must pluck up. You must be brave. You must say, 'I'm an artist. I will succeed in spite of everybody!'

"I can't. I'm down, crushed, heart-broken."

"Connie," said Philip, catching hold of her by the arm, "for God's sake stop! I meant well. I thought it was such a chance. I feel as if I could kill myself."

She turned and looked at him. "Kill yourself?"

"Yes; to have given you a moment's pain, to have given you this hideous disappointment."

I shrank back to the window again. In Philip's distressed face I had seen the death-blow of all my hopes!

#### VII.

WHAT a time it was that followed! I said nothing. I didn't like to say out all that was in my mind. Connie was mad at the failure of all her hopes, and was by turns crushed, hopeful, depressed, buoyant, tragic, sad, pathetic, and gay. One never knew how to take her nor how to find her.

"Philip, Philip, you are my good angel," she cried one day, a week or two after the miserable interview with Tregarth. "You are the only one of them all that believes in me. Help me. Don't give me up. Don't let me sink into the slough of nothingness. Philip, take me to see Lavender."

So we went on through the hot August days until mellow September came. We were too poor to think of going away. We were even too poor to think of pulling down our blinds and pretending that we were out of town. Mother sat out in the little garden under the shade of our one sycamore-tree. I did my usual work, and painted in between-times as if for dear life. Connie rushed in and out, up and down, and the children found their pleasure and amusement as best they could. It was not all darkness for them, for Aunt Margaret gave them seasons for the Exhibition, and thither they went with one or two young friends, until they must have known every rubbishy stall in the place. And among it all Philip came and went,—a Philip who was not my Philip at all, a Philip who treated me as if I were his long-wedded wife, carelessly touching my cheek with his lips, calling me dearest in a perfunctory kind of way, while his whole heart was unmistakably centred on Connie. And I said nothing.

I felt a certain delicacy in broaching the subject. I didn't like to say to Philip, "I know everything that has happened. I can see the war that is raging in your heart. You made a mistake when you thought I was the woman of your heart. It is Connie, Connie with her mystic eyes, with her strange, nameless grace, Connie with her rapturous ideals and enthusiasms."

Late in September Philip succeeded in bringing about an interview with Lavender.

"I think," he said, when he brought her the news that Lavender would see her on the following morning, "I think that I am not lucky to you. I will go as far as the stage door and no farther. Lavender will unravel you better if I am not there. I will wait out in the street."

"No, no; go with me."

"I think not. I went with you before. It was a mistake. You shall go to Lavender by yourself."

True to his word, he came the following morning to fetch her. I waited in desperate anxiety until their return.

Connie was modestly jubilant. "Lavender is a darling," she said; "so different from the other one. Yes, he encouraged me to a certain extent. He hasn't an opening, won't have for months and months, but he's given me several letters of introduction. He asked me to do various things,—to read, to repeat something, to walk across the stage. He says I may do after a time. I'm *going* to do! I must get there! Oh, these men, even the best of them, are so cold-blooded! They don't realize when they are criticising us as if we were heifers put up for exhibition—they don't realize that it is a matter of life and death! He was very kind, said I was good-looking,—which I knew,—and that, if I worked, I might do something some day. I *will* do something! You'll see if I don't justify my belief in myself."

And all the time I stood by, watching,—all through the days that followed when Connie went hither and thither, carrying her letters of introduction to this manager and that, knowing that her success meant the funeral of all my worldly hopes. Philip was just as anxious as she was. I am sure that he did no work to speak of during those soft autumn days. For one thing, he was busy painting a portrait of Connie, ostensibly for mother, but I knew that in reality it was a work of love, and undertaken for no other reason.

So I stood by and watched the drama play out, while my very heart was breaking. Ten more days went by. Then one afternoon Philip came as usual and worked in a desultory kind of way on the details of the portrait. He intended to send it to the following year's Academy. The figure wasn't nearly finished, but he was able, in Connie's absence, to work on the velvet draperies which formed the background. I was sewing at the dining-room window; mother was sitting near the fire, her hands lying idle in her lap, her eyes fixed upon space. She always sat so now. Down in the studio Philip was working like a madman. We were thus disposed when Connie came tearing back from her interview with a manager who was about to produce a new piece.

"Joy! joy!" she exclaimed. "Oh Philip, mother, Joan, I've got an engagement! Three guineas a week! Think what it means! Oh Philip, Philip, I have you to thank for it all."

Philip flung down his brushes and came hurrying up the steps of the studio. "Is it true?" he cried.

"True? Yes, it's the glorious truth. I'm the happiest woman in London this day. It's the beginning, it's the first step that's so difficult. Oh Philip, my good angel! And to think that all these weeks I've been blaming you because I didn't get on more quickly! Philip, forgive me, forgive me!"

As he caught her hands in his mother rose from her chair in a bewildered kind of way. Her enfeebled brain didn't take in all that was happening. She dimly felt that something was amiss, and looked from them to me for an explanation. I put down my work upon the little table near which I had been sitting.

"Come, mother," I said, "you and I are not wanted here. Come, let us go."

I led her towards the door without so much as a look at either of the two standing entranced with each other near the entrance to the studio. Just as I closed the door of the room behind us I heard a voice say "Joan, Joan!" but I shut it resolutely upon my misery and my happiness in life.

"What is the matter?" said my mother. "Has anything happened?"

"I don't know, dear. I think there's nothing the matter. Let us go upstairs; we're not wanted. They will be all right together."

I took my mother into the drawing-room and established her in her favorite spot near the window. "Sit there, dearest. You get a cheerful view of the street."

"And you?" she said hesitatingly. She put out her hand and grasped mine.

"Don't trouble about me, mother. I shall be all right."

We stayed a long time there—at least, it seemed long to me, when Connie came in search of me.

"Joan," she said, "you haven't said a word to congratulate me."

"On what?"

"On my success, on my luck. Oh," she burst out passionately, "don't you understand what it means to me?"

"Yes, I understand too well. It is you, Connie, who do not understand what all this means to me."

She turned scarlet, and her eyes drooped before mine. "I—we—" she stammered. "We—we are not going—at least, we are not going to ask you—"

"Well, I suppose neither of you could help yourself. It seems



that we have made a mistake, Philip and I. We were a little premature in our arrangement. So far as I am concerned, Connie, Philip is free."

She caught her breath with a kind of sob, whether of relief or of sympathy with me I have never been able to tell. "You don't mean——"

"Yes, I mean exactly that. I give Philip over to you. See that you are good to him."

"I don't think Philip will—consent."

"Won't he? Let us go and find him. Is he still in the studio?"

"I think so."

So we went together, my sister and I, in search of the man who had already grown tired of me. He had seemed to love me so much, but he really cared for me so little!

"Philip," I said, keeping tight hold of Connie's hand as I went down the steps of the dining-room into the studio, "Philip, I know everything. Here, take her. We made a great mistake, you and I. We were never meant for each other. I've seen this coming ever so long. Don't let a thought of me stand in your light."

"What! Can you give me up so easily?" he asked reproachfully. A man is always reproachful when a woman seeks to free herself of him, even though he be desperately anxious to break the ties which bind him.

"Yes, I can give you up because it's no use keeping the husk when the kernel is gone elsewhere. I am one of those misguided people who must have all or nothing. I think that we made a mistake. Why keep on an engagement when we both see clearly that it would not do, that it would be absurd, ridiculous? You love Connie; Connie loves you. Your engagement to me was a little error in judgment. Take her. I give you to each other."

I didn't wait for the torrent of thanks which burst from his lips. I heard it as I hurried out of the room. I wanted to get away—not to cry, because that was not my nature. I wanted to get out of sight of their radiant happiness. I wanted to find refuge in those commonplace little duties which had been my portion so long. Few people realize how merciful a screen the trivial round and the common task make for us in our blackest hours of anguish.

I went then straight into the kitchen. Oh, you thought I was going to say that I went into my bedroom, flung myself on to my bed, and cried my heart out? Not I! I went into the kitchen and told Hanna that I wanted tea at once. I set the tray for her, as I often did, choosing the cleanest of the several embroidered cloths of which our establishment boasted. I cut the bread and butter because I could cut it thinner than Hanna was able to do; and then, when Hanna had carried the

tray into the drawing-room and placed the little table where it always stood, I went and served tea, attending to mother just in the usual way.

"Come, you two, come to tea," I said. "It's waiting, and you must want it."

"We're coming," said Connie.

"Yes, we're coming," repeated Philip, with such a look at me—a look of reproach for my coldness.

"By the bye," I said to him, "I ought to give you back this." And then I slipped off my engagement-ring, and laid it in his hand.

### VIII.

WRITTEN, it seems little or nothing, but lived—oh, those next few weeks were like a century of martyrdom!

When once Philip had satisfied himself, which he easily did, that it had been no particular effort or pain to me to give up my engagement, he settled down to a delirium of happiness with Connie.

"Look here," he said to me, a day or two after all had come to an end between us, "don't give me back my ring. I gave it to you—I didn't lend it. It always seems to me so mean when men go to law to get back the ring that they have given the girl they cared for. I couldn't give it to Connie. I should not like anybody to wear it but you. You might wear it sometimes in token of friendship between us, will you?"

"Oh, yes; I'll keep it." I held out my hand, but I didn't put it on my finger. "I'll not wear it just yet, Philip—by and by."

He caught hold of my hand. "And you are quite sure——"

"Oh, yes, my dear boy, I'm quite sure. It was a mistake. Don't let it trouble you again."

Connie was even more easy to satisfy. "You didn't care a dump for Philip, did you?" she said to me on the evening of our understanding with each other. "He is worrying about it. Men are so conceited, you know. They can't conceive that we can really exist without them. I told him that I was quite sure you were as glad to be free of him as he was of you. Why, dear old Joan, I know you inside out. I should, shouldn't I?"

"Yes, dear, you should, and you do; of course you do. I—I—really, I wish you wouldn't worry about it any more. The thing is over and done with, and now you two can be as happy—as happy as a king and queen. Don't think about me. It's not necessary. You'll make me miserable if you keep on imagining that I'm breaking my heart because Philip made a mistake. We both made a mistake. Don't speak of it again, it annoys me."

She accepted my assertion as being beyond dispute, and settled down to enjoy her engagement with a light-heartedness which in itself was

sufficient to tell me that she no longer had a glimmer of conscience about her. She was from the very beginning a different kind of sweet-heart from me. She led Philip a life! He at once demanded that she should give up the stage, all idea of the stage.

"I'm doing better now," he said. "I was only at the beginning of my career, but with you for my wife, I shall make pots of money, see if I don't."

"And in the meantime, Philip, my dear boy, I shall spend pots of money, so that it's just as well I should help to earn it. Besides, it's my career. I can't give it up for anybody."

"A career! Three guineas a week!"

"Yes. Small beginnings make great endings. If you don't like me to go on with my work, say so, and we'll part."

And, of course, Philip, being very much in love, assured her that she should then and always do exactly as she thought best.

Well, they were married. There was no reason why they should wait. With the money he was able to make, and he had made great strides in his profession during the past twelve months, and her three guineas a week, they would be quite well enough off to begin housekeeping in a modest way. So they were married.

It was a quiet little wedding, with only the two girls, Gracie and Mona, for bridesmaids. I took our mother's place and gave Connie away. She wore a simple white gown and a big white hat, which looked strangely out of keeping with the dreary November day. The girls had smart red frocks and big black hats—useful things, which would serve for best during the coming winter. Philip was very nervous, but Connie was radiant. They had no honeymoon, because of Connie's engagement at the Queen's Theatre. They had taken a charming little house with a back studio, not ten minutes' walk from our own, and thither Philip took Connie straight after we had been home from church and seen mother.

"Mind you," said Aunt Margaret, "I disapprove of the whole business. I wash my hands of the whole concern. You, Joan, I admit, behaved like an angel. That miserable flibbertigibbet, Connie, has assured me over and over again that you were very glad to be free from your engagement, and that you never cared a button for Philip Stonor. That's as may be. I have my own opinion. From this day I wash my hands of the entire concern. They may sink or swim, they may rise or fall, they may live or die, but they can do it all without Margaret Phloxley, and I told Connie so yesterday. She made an impudent mouth at me; but that's the sort of thing one expects from Connie."

"I wish you wouldn't, Aunt Margaret."

"I know—I know it as well as if I was inside that unselfish soul of yours and knew the exact thoughts that were chasing through your

mind. I'll say no more after this, but my say I must have to-day. Mark my words: no good will come of this morning's work. There never was a fine structure built upon a rotten foundation yet, and there never will be. They have started to build their matrimonial palace on a broken heart; their road to happiness has been paved with broken vows. You may put a good face on it, you may pretend—and you're quite right to do it—that you don't care a bit. Keep it up, my girl; keep it up. You have the everlasting respect of your Aunt Margaret Phloxley, but she has done with Mr. and Mrs. Philip Stonor."

She was true to her word, that grand old aunt of mine. She never mentioned the subject again. She never went into Connie's house, and she never asked Connie or Philip into hers.

"No," she said one day when Connie reproached her for never having been near her, "no, I have not been. No, no, I'm a very disagreeable person to know, and you don't want me for myself. I don't like your ways. I don't like anything that you do. I never cared about you, although you are so like your poor mother; and I never go to places that bore me or that I don't feel at home in. I should not feel at home in your house. Therefore I do not come."

"I think it's very horrid of you, Aunt Margaret."

"I am glad you do," said Aunt Margaret. "I like you to think me horrid. I should be very much disappointed if I thought you were at all fond of me or had the smallest desire to be on good terms with me. Go your way. You have married a husband, and you don't want your mother's old aunt ornamenting your husband's smart studio. You can fill the house with actresses—very much more attractive than a plain, blunt old woman like me."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself as to that, Aunt Margaret, it's easy enough to fill the house," said Connie very pertly. "I only asked you out of a sense of duty, not at all because I wanted you."

"Very good! Then I refuse because I don't want to come, and we're quits."

"I can't think," said Connie to me when Aunt Margaret had gone, "why Aunt Margaret should hate me as she does. She never used to be like this before I got married. I should have thought that, when I had taken myself out of the way of the family and was no further expense, she would have been pleased and delighted. Not a bit of it! She treats me as if I were a perfect criminal,—old cat!"

I said nothing. It was not my mission in life to smooth Connie's path any further than I had done.

I went once or twice to the theatre where she was playing. She looked very pretty on the stage, but she was not and never would be an actress of any distinction.

"You like me in the part?" she asked.

"It's a pretty little part," I replied.

"Ye-es; but there's no scope. Warrender is so jealous of me; she'll take care I don't get a part worth playing. That's the worst of being a beginner. All the older women know how to pull the leg of the manager, and they take good care that the young and pretty ones don't get a look in."

I knew myself that the cause was in Connie, and not in any of the other actresses who might happen to be in the same theatre; but it was no business of mine to speak, and I let her remarks pass in silence.

"I think it's perfectly horrid of Aunt Margaret," she burst out presently. "It's upset Philip more than enough that she will not come near us and won't accept one of our invitations."

"It's no use, Philip must bear it," I said.

"I know perfectly well what she thinks. She thinks you're broken-hearted for love of Philip. Silly old thing! I'm sure Philip was no such catch."

My heart gave a great, sick throb. "Connie," I said, "don't you care for Philip?"

"Oh, yes—well enough; but he was no sort of a match, you must admit. I hate your love-in-a-cottage sort of business. If I had waited, I might have married a man with a lot of money. I was a little fool to let myself be snapped up before I had had a chance of seeing the world."

"But you were in love with Philip."

"Yes, I liked him well enough; but liking a man and living with him are two very different things."

"But Philip was in love with you?"

"Yes, I suppose he was. He's coming to his senses now though."

"Philip?"

"Oh, you needn't say 'Philip' in that way, as though he was a sort of saint. If he was a saint, he's gone wrong a bit. He's very trying to live with, always wanting me to sit and be a model for him. As if I was going to! I said to him yesterday, 'My dear boy, time is money with me. If you want a model, you must get a professional person and pay her in the usual way.'"

"How horrid of you!"

"Think so? Philip will agree with you. Heigh-ho! it isn't all beer and skittles being Mrs. Philip Stonor, I can assure you. Believe me, Joan, dear old girl, I saved you a good bit when I made you break your engagement to Philip Stonor."

She pulled her veil into position, set her hat straight,—at least, set it at the correct angle on her head,—touched her fringe here and there, and whisked out of the room with an airy and very theatrical wave of the hand.

So it wasn't all beer and skittles being Mrs. Philip Stonor! And for this I had bartered away my life's happiness! Well, I hadn't done it for Connie, no; I hadn't sold my very soul for Connie. The kernel was gone from me, and I set no value on the husk.

## IX.

SOME little time went by ere I gathered any more information about the small household in Gleeson Grove. I didn't go very much to my sister's house. For one thing, I was very much tied by the state of our mother's health, and as Gracie and Mona were both at school now, I had nobody to depend upon except Hanna. When Hanna had finished her work, was dressed, and was able to sit with my mother, I could not often go to Connie's house, because it was generally late in the afternoon before I was free. They dined at six o'clock, on account of Connie's professional work.

"You might just as well dine at seven," Philip said to her one day when I happened to be there. "Six o'clock is a ghastly and an ungodly time to expect a man to eat his dinner."

"You can eat it by yourself, my dear, if you like. I have no objection, I'm sure; but it means double work for the servants, and neither of us getting such a comfortable dinner. I don't think it's very much for a man to give up to his wife when it's a question of work."

"It's so unnecessary. If you had the weight of the whole London stage on your shoulders, it might be necessary to dine at three in the afternoon; but the three lines you have to speak will be spoken just as well at nine o'clock if you dine at seven. I shouldn't mind sacrificing myself if it were necessary."

"It's the regular thing to do; it's the proper habit to get into," said Connie, a very ugly look coming across her lovely face. "Besides, if I have not a very big part now, I'm under-study to a very big part, and I might have to make a great effort at very short notice. Of course, that wouldn't be anything to you. You'll stay and have some dinner, Joan?"

"No, thank you, dear, I'd rather not."

"Well, we'll come round and have lunch on Sunday—at least, I shall. I can't answer for Philip. He is such a very uncertain quantity."

"I shall be delighted to come on Sunday," said Philip, speaking for himself.

I was glad to get out of the house. My sister's disposition and her determination to go her own way—and nothing but her own way—were extremely painful, and Philip's moody face struck home to me like a blow. I could not bear to hear all the bickering and wrangling between them; to see black looks where there should have been only sunshine;



to see what might have been a paradise turned into a place of torment. You may think that it was in a sense a pleasure to me to see that my sister was not radiantly happy in the love that had originally been mine. I had no such feeling. I don't think—although until about this time I had not realized it myself—that I had altered in the very least towards Philip Stonor. That was one reason why I went so little to the house in Gleeson Grove. He was still my idol among men. I still admired him more than any man I had ever seen. I admired his personal appearance, his looks,—everything about him. The touch of his hand still sufficed to thrill through me like an electric shock; the tones of his voice still had the greatest possible charm for me—in short, I was still in love with him. Well, I think that is a way of putting it which does not convey what I really felt. "In love" is an inadequate phrase. I still loved him with all my heart and soul. I loved him so much that even then I would have bought happiness for him at any cost to myself.

I looked forward to the Sunday's visit with dread, and, as is frequently the case, when looking forward either to pleasure or to pain, the realization fell short of the anticipation. They were more on the old terms on which they had been during their brief engagement. Connie was coy and gleefully difficult, but she was not forbidding, and Philip was evidently more in love with her than ever.

"You are happy, Connie?" I said when they were going away, and she had come up into my room to put on her hat and coat.

She gave a sort of sigh. "My dear girl, are any of us happy? Not while we have ambitions to gratify, aims to attain, something to wish for, hope for, work for. I'm happy in a way. It's better for me in my profession to be married than to be single. It's better for me to be in a house that I can regulate according to my own convenience than to live here, and have to regulate everything to poor mother."

"But Philip?" I said.

"Oh, Philip; he's all right; don't worry about him. Very difficult to live with, dear child. They're very different after you have got them from what they were before they had got you."

"Philip's awfully in love with you, Connie."

"Yes, I know it—at times, not always. Sometimes he wakes up and says to himself, 'What did I marry this girl for?' I've seen it over and over again. Then, in betweentimes, he's awfully in love, passionately in love, altogether in love. Upon my word, I don't know which is the most trying."

It was a bitterly cold night when I went to the door with them. Philip noticed that Connie's coat was undone at the throat.

"You're not going out with your throat all bare, out of this hot house?" he asked. "How foolish of you!"

"Oh, I like the air. Let me alone," she said. "I can manage my own throat, thank you."

He never noticed that I was wearing a very thin blouse, the neck being entirely of lace. Aunt Margaret had given it to me on my birthday, a few weeks before, and I had put it on in honor of their visit. He never noticed that as I stood on the door-step in the bitter wind, but troubled himself to fasten the furs about his wife's throat in spite of her vigorous protests.

"I tell you," he said, "you'll get your death of cold; and it looks horrid open. Here, let me fasten it."

I quite anticipated an outbreak from Connie. She, however, submitted, as the most difficult women often do when they are firmly enough treated by a mere man.

"There, go along, do. We're keeping Joan standing in the cold. As if I could take a chill under all these furs, you silly old creature!"

"I beg you ten thousand pardons, Joan; I forgot. Forgive me. Good-night."

In spite of the biting air, I watched them go away up the street. I noticed that he slipped his hand under her arm, but they didn't seem to keep in step, and before they had turned the corner they were walking apart.

I sighed as I turned and went into the house. How differently I should have gone up the street with Philip! How differently we had always walked together! Well, I had loved him with my whole heart. Oh, I loved him still, and all that it had done for me was to leave me here alone, while he was walking to his own house with my sister, who would rather have been anywhere else! What a tangle life is! What a curious array of knots and hitches, what a huge medley of mistakes!

I didn't see them again for some days. Then Connie sent a note round, begging me to go and have dinner with them.

"As Philip very truly says," she wrote, "it's an ungodly hour, but do come. I haven't seen you for nearly a week, and I want to show you—I want—I'll tell you when you come. I shall rely upon you."

Of course, I went. "What's the matter, Connie?" I asked.

"Oh my dear, everything! It's just a year since we were married. What a year to have put in!"

"Oh Connie!"

"Yes, I know what you feel. From time to time I have felt uneasy in my mind, ever since the first day that you gave—you gave way to us. We made a mistake, Joan. I was never made for Philip, and Philip was never made for me. We have found it out. In a way, he's been very good to me. He has put up with things that I wouldn't put up with on my side. On the other hand, I have tried to stick to him when

I've had plenty of temptation to go elsewhere. Joan, marriage can be an awful thing."

"Oh my dear, my sister, something has happened between you. Something has gone wrong—I mean really wrong—or you would never give vent to such horrible sentiments as these. Surely marriage is the most perfect life that we can imagine here below."

"Always provided that you get the right man, and that the right man gets the right woman. We're just the wrong man and woman, Philip and I. And yet, did we deserve happiness, either the one or the other of us? Not a bit of it! Don't you believe it. We did the wrong thing, both he and I. We rode rough-shod over your heart, we didn't care how miserable we made you, and it's come home to us. Such doings always come home, sooner or later."

"I wish you wouldn't say that—I wish you wouldn't think these dreadful things. What has happened between you?"

"The usual thing: everything I do is wrong, everything I say is wrong, everything I like is wrong."

"Oh, no."

"Yes; it's got to that. I can't speak or think or act or buy or sell or do anything in the right way—it's all wrong. Philip looks at me through yellow spectacles."

"And how do you look at Philip?"

"I? Well, to tell you the honest truth, my dear, Philip bores me. I think he always bored me, excepting just at first."

"Oh, you loved him at first!"

"I suppose I did—I thought so; but he bored me afterwards, and there's no end so sure to a love-story as when boredom steps in. However, I need not trouble you. We've made our bed, and we must lie upon it, both of us. I wanted to see you, I wanted to have you near me for an hour or so. You were always my rock, my sheet-anchor, you know. When we were ever so young, I always came to you for everything. I came to you for a lover; now I come to you for comfort. I wanted to see your dear, solemn old face for an hour or two before I have to go out into the world. It's a hard world, Joan. It isn't all beer and skittles being an actress."

"My dear, nothing in this world is all beer and skittles. You said the same thing about being Philip's wife."

"It was true enough. I've said it many a time since then. Oh, there's the bell. Now come, my dear old solemn one, come down and eat. At least, thank God! we're able to keep a decent cook."

I followed her down to the dining-room, where Philip was already awaiting us. I saw that something had gone grievously wrong between them. He was kind and affectionate in his manner to me, while to his wife he was scrupulously polite, too polite for everything to be well

between them. My sister made no pretence. She addressed her conversation mainly to me. She forbore making any hints at him, and for this I was profoundly thankful. She asked all sorts of questions about the children, about our mother, Hanna, and even about Aunt Margaret. At last she seemed to remember the time, and glanced hurriedly at a diamond-circled watch which she wore upon her wrist.

"Hullo, you've a smart watch there," I said. To tell the truth, I caught at the new possession as a subject for conversation, because with relations so strained as was the case with them at that moment, it was naturally difficult to talk sympathetically and unconcernedly.

"Yes, it's a nice watch," she said carelessly. "Oh, by the bye, I've missed my train. I must take a cab."

"Shall I call you one?" said Philip.

"I wish you would. I won't be two minutes putting on my things."

She dashed up the stairs, and was down on the door-step, enveloped in furs, by the time her husband had summoned a hansom.

"Good-by, darling old Joan; thank you so much for coming. I feel ever so much better and stronger. Philip will see you home. Good-by, darling; good-night."

X.

As the cab turned away from the door I felt Philip give a shiver. "It's very cold," he said. "Pray come in. You ought not to have come out here at all."

He closed the hall-door behind us and led the way into the dining-room.

"Come," he said, "here's some particularly good cheese."

"I don't eat cheese, thank you, Philip."

"Well, have some of those cheese straws. This cook makes them to perfection."

I helped myself to the little bits of pastry, which were lying in front of me, and pushed the dish towards Philip.

"I ought to be going home," I said.

"Not at all; you haven't finished your dinner. Connie always—or nearly always—goes away in the middle of the meal. It's a nice, comfortable state of things."

"Something has happened between you, Philip," I said.

"No, nothing's happened in the ordinary meaning of the word. We've found out, she and I, that we made a mistake. Connie is bored to death by the irksomeness of marriage. She wants to be free; she wants to live her own life, unfettered by any necessities of mine. That's all."

"And you, Philip?"

The moment the words had passed my lips I repented having uttered them. Oh, I would have given ten years of my life to have

been able to draw them back again; but the word that is once spoken is as the arrow that is shot from the bow: it cannot be recalled.

"Well—I—have—found out that—I—too made a mistake."

He spoke very slowly, not looking at me, but at the tips of his fingers, which I am sure, at that moment, he did not see.

"Oh, don't say that, Philip."

"I may as well say it. It's true," he said gloomily. "I was a fool. Most men are fools in their time. So many of them mistake the shadow for the substance. It isn't given to many to mistake the substance for the shadow. That's what I have done. I had the chance of happiness. I chucked it away, as a school-boy chucks a pebble into the stream. No, I'm not going to say anything to embarrass you. You are my sister-in-law now, you're in my house, and—my wife is absent. So far as you and I are concerned, my lips are sealed, but it was a lucky day for you when you gave me up."

I looked straight across the table at him. Words were trembling on my lips which would have told him exactly what I felt; which would have told him that I loved him better than ever; that his very faults were precious to me; that I fully understood all that he was feeling; that I blamed, reproached, pitied my sister for the attitude that she had taken up. But in this life we seldom say exactly what is in our hearts. I did not do so then. I sat still, holding my hands tight one over the other, and looking straight at the moody face and downcast eyes.

"Philip," I said at last, "is there nothing that I can do? Cannot I bring a better state of things about? Cannot I help you and Connie?"

"Nothing can help us," he said in a tone of absolute conviction. "We made the one great, big mistake. It's a big lottery, marriage. Sometimes it turns up trumps, but more often it shows only blanks. We have both drawn blanks, she and I, and neither of us likes it. It's all this theatre, that's what it is."

"Can't you persuade her to give it up?"

"I've tried my best. Every day she comes back with some fresh idea in her mind. Some fellow gave her that watch you admired so much."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, I'm as sure as I can be. A woman doesn't buy a watch like that on three guineas a week. She's always bringing back flowers and jewels, and having invitations to supper that she never tells me about. She doesn't often go to them, it's true; but she goes to a good many places that I know nothing of. She knows heaps of people that I don't know. It isn't right; it isn't natural."

"But you should assert yourself. You should tell her that you don't like it."

"I have told her till I'm tired. And to-day I told her to go her own road, that she should have no more of me as the drag upon her chariot-wheel. I'm here and the home is here; when she chooses to use it, she's welcome to it. Otherwise, I'm going to wash my hands of the whole concern; I'm going to let Connie's outer life be a life in which I have neither lot nor part."

"I don't think that's right of you. I don't think—indeed, I think it's absolutely wrong. You're throwing her—and she's very young—into temptations that may be too strong. It isn't right of you, Philip."

"No, perhaps it isn't, but it will please her more. I've never done the right thing. It's too late to begin now."

"I think I'll go home."

"No, no; not yet. You must wait for coffee, and probably there's fruit of some kind. Oh, here's Fraser."

The maid came in and changed the plates. The fruit was not very plentiful—a few white grapes upon a smart dessert-dish, that had been one of Connie's wedding-presents, was all that was set before us.

"Bring us the coffee at once, please, Fraser."

"Yes, sir," said the girl.

"And now," I said, when we had eaten a few grapes and drunk our coffee, "I'll thank you to take me home, Philip."

"Are you afraid of being left here with me? I want you to come and see my pictures; I want you to go round the studio with me. I'll take you home presently."

"I—I would rather go now."

"No, no—half-an-hour in the studio—a little cigarette, for the sake of old times."

I didn't want to remember the old times. I wanted to do nothing for the sake of old times. I didn't want to see his pictures—at least, it was so much pain to be there alone with him that I would rather have foregone the pleasure of seeing them. However, to have been too persistent might have seemed as if I were afraid to trust myself alone in his company, and I would have died sooner than let him know that he still reigned omnipotent in my heart.

So we left the dining-room and went into the large, dimly lighted studio. He turned up the lights here and there and went round with me, showing me this, that, and the other. It was a pilgrimage of pain. There were sketches that I had seen in the beginning, still unfinished; there were others that I had seen in the rough, now completed; there were old friends and new acquaintances, and there was a huge unfinished portrait of Connie.

"That's Connie," he said, as I paused in front of the easel on which the canvas stood. "Of course, it's only a quarter finished. She



won't sit to me for it. I don't suppose it will ever get any further than it is now. No, I can't paint from memory. If I could, I wouldn't."

I finished the round of the pictures and paused before the fireplace. There was a good fire burning in the wide grate, and two old oak settees were drawn close up to it.

"Joan," he said, as I sat myself upon one of them, "do you remember that I once did a little portrait of you for your mother?"

"Oh, yes."

"I wish you'd let me do a big one of you—for myself."

"Oh, you don't want to paint me."

"I do. I want to paint you very, very badly. Will you?"

"I'll see what Connie says."

"Oh, it doesn't matter what Connie says. She's gone her way; I'm going mine."

"But your way isn't mine, Philip," I said to him.

"More's the pity! Oh Joan, what a fool I've been! But there, I promised I would say nothing to embarrass you. You'll sit for me—a good, big portrait, companion to your sister's, and I'll send it in to the Academy and make my name by it."

"I don't care to do it. I haven't much time. I—would rather not."

"Do! You don't know how badly I want to do it; you don't know how I've set my heart on it. I feel I can paint you, and I've never felt that before. When I painted that little thing for your mother, it was child's play. This will be a man's work."

"You ought rather to do your wife."

"Ought I? She doesn't seem to think so. Besides, in my present frame of mind I couldn't do her justice. I'm just in the mood to do a good portrait of you, and you know what a business of moods painting always is."

"I'll think about it; I'll tell you the next time I see you. I won't promise to-night, so it's not a bit of good asking me any more. And now, Philip, you said you'd take me home."

"Are you so anxious to get away from me? There must be something wrong about me altogether. Well, if you'll put on your things, I'll go home with you."

I had taken off my out-door garments in the studio, and they were then lying on a large settee near the door which led into the dining-room. There was a mirror in a carved frame hanging on the wall near by, and I put my hat on, adjusting it as carefully as though my heart were not in a whirl and my brain in a tumult. Philip had followed me across the room, and he took my coat from me and held it that I might easily slip into it. Then I drew my fur collar up above my ears.

"Won't you turn the lights down?" I said.

I was always frugal. I had been poor so long that frugality had

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become the habit of my life. Philip turned back, and I passed out through the dining-room and into the little hall.

"I'll just slip my coat on; I'll not be a minute," he said.

He was as good as his word, and together we left the house and turned our faces in the direction of my home.

"It's rather dark here; won't you have an arm?" he asked.

So I took his arm for the first time since the days when it was my right to take it. We walked for some minutes in silence.

"How well our steps suit each other," he said presently.

The very same thought was in my mind. I had been seeing, as we walked along the ill-lighted side-street, a picture of Philip and Connie as they had left our house together on the occasion of their last visit, of how he had put his hand under her arm, and their steps had clashed, so that before they reached the end of the street they were walking apart.

"I'm taller than Connie," I said.

He turned and looked down upon me. "Who said anything about Connie? Not I."

"No, that's true; but you were thinking of Connie, and so was I. That was all. I meant nothing by it."

"I know you didn't. You mean nothing but what's good and true and honest. But there, I don't want to say anything more, either of Connie or of myself. We'll talk about other things. Personal conversation is always a hideous mistake."

He told me then of several bits of luck that had come in his way,—I mean of professional luck,—and he told me one or two little anecdotes of men that we both knew, and kept up a cheerful conversation until we reached my door.

It was a painful walk, because we were both making conversation, in which neither of us had any heart. We were each trying to conceal the truth from the other, and succeeding very badly.

"You'll come in?" I said as we reached the door.

"No, you've had enough of me for one night. I'm afraid I've bored you to extinction. I never used to bore you; if I did, I was unconscious of it."

"Oh, no, you don't bore me. What nonsense is this?"

"Is it nonsense? She told me this morning that it made her tired even to think of me."

"Oh, she didn't mean it."

"I think she did. Good-night."

"Good-by."

He raised his hat and strode away down the street without waiting for the door to be opened.

I watched him go with the tears rolling down my face.

## XI.

IN due course of time the girls came home for their holidays. That was just before Christmas. Connie made them very handsome presents, and also gave me a set of furs which I had long been wanting. I wondered how she could afford it, but even to one's own sister there are some questions which are difficult, almost impossible, to put. Two years before I should not have hesitated to say, "Connie, my dear, you cannot afford these superb gifts; you haven't got the money to pay for them." But now all that was altered. Since Connie had married she had become a totally different being. She seemed to have expanded into somebody whom we had really hardly ever known—a somebody who was very affectionate but very distant; who kept her affairs absolutely to herself; who made no inquiries about ours, beyond the ordinary inquiries of affection. To mother she gave a beautiful white shawl, very soft and finely worked, and mother was as pleased with it as if she had been a child.

"So soft and nice," she said, smoothing down the delicate folds with her white, useless hands. "So kind of dear Connie! How nice to think that she is able to give such pleasure!"

It was quite a long speech for mother, who hardly ever spoke now, excepting to answer questions put directly to her.

I didn't disturb mother's mind with my ideas on the subject of Connie's arrangements, but on the afternoon of Christmas Day when she came to us, for she and Philip were going to dine with us in the evening, I just ventured to touch upon the subject. I should not have done so had Philip been with her, but Connie came alone, saying that Philip was coming later.

"I don't think you ought to have spent such a lot of money for us, Connie," I said half-reproachfully.

"Oh, I didn't spend very much."

"Well, my dear, you did. You should have sent things half as good. They would have been just as acceptable. I'm sure, Connie, it must be a tax on you."

"It's a tax I like. It's little enough I'm ever able to do for you, between Philip's grumpiness and having to be at the theatre every night. It's an awful grind, the theatre."

"Then why don't you give it up?"

"Oh my dear, I couldn't live upon Philip. Philip is a kind of person who would make it desperately hard if one had to go to him for every farthing one needed. I have always thanked God that I began with an independence, that I have never had to ask Philip to buy me my clothes or my fallals, or all the little et cæteras that one can't do without. What did Aunt Margaret send you?"

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"Oh, the usual thing—a fiver each."

"Did she? She never sent me a present, not even a penny Christmas card. However, she's washed her hands of me, and I must try to live out the rest of my existence without her."

"That's Aunt Margaret's knock," I said.

"Oh dear, there's no rest for the wicked," sighed Connie. "I did think I might have had an hour or two with my own sisters on Christmas Day without that tabby's coming and spoiling everything."

"Hush!" I said. "She will hear you."

"I dare say she will. I shouldn't mind if she did. Oh, how do you do, Aunt Margaret?" she remarked, as the old lady came bustling into the room.

"How do you do, Constance Stonor?" said Aunt Margaret brusquely. "Joan, my love, I think you're looking pale. You ought to have a change. You're too much with your poor mother."

"She does want a change, Aunt Margaret," said Connie, speaking for me.

"Yes, she does; and I don't know whose fault it is that she hasn't had a change long before this. Don't talk to me about a change, Constance Stonor," returned Aunt Margaret.

"Aunt Margaret Phloxley, I won't," said Connie. "I never want to talk to you about anything. Heaven knows, you're disagreeable enough to prevent anyone from ever wanting to speak to you again as long as they live."

"H'm! There's one thing you've learned since you changed your state, and that's to use your tongue."

"No, I haven't learned that; I knew how to before. It was worth my while to keep my tongue quiet then; it isn't now. So I let it say just what it likes."

"Joan, my love," said Aunt Margaret, "I'm going upstairs to see your poor mother. Tell that little vixen there that I shall not speak to her again."

"Joan, my love," said Connie, "tell Margaret Phloxley that Mrs. Philip Stonor is very much beholden to her."

"I'm sorry to hear it," said Aunt Margaret. "There's nothing I dislike so much as doing good turns to people I neither admire nor respect."

"Joan, my love——" began Connie, when I interrupted.

"Oh, do be quiet, Connie."

"My love——"

"Now, Connie, be quiet. Let Aunt Margaret alone. Yes, do go and see mother. I really cannot stay if you two are going to quarrel all the time. It's horrible, it's humiliating. I suppose the truth is, you get on each other's nerves."

"I don't know, I'm sure. I know she gets on mine, old cat!" said Connie roughly.

Mercifully, by this time Aunt Margaret had left the room, and was already to be heard creaking up the stairs on her way to see our mother.

"Now, Connie, do leave Aunt Margaret alone. Promise me you will."

"My dear, it's no use promising. I couldn't keep it if I did. I could sit and twirl my thumbs for ever so long; then Aunt Margaret would say something beastly and call me Constance Stonor, and then I should burst out and let fly exactly what I thought. Then the whole fat would be in the fire. It's no use, Joan. Aunt Margaret never liked me, and I never liked Aunt Margaret, and she's never forgiven me—well, for marrying Philip. If she knew what it is to be married to Philip, she would never mention the subject to me again. She would consider me amply punished."

"I do wish, Connie, that you would stop. You don't know how it hurts me to hear you go on in this reckless, don't-care fashion."

"Oh, by the bye, I came a little earlier to-day for a special reason. I want to have a little chat with you," said Connie. "I've had such a lovely present. Look here!"

She pulled her furs on one side, disclosing a smart geranium-red blouse, very much trimmed with lace. Round her throat she was wearing an exquisite necklace of single stones.

"Of course, it's paste," I said.

"Paste? Don't you believe it for a moment. There's no paste about these."

She slipped the necklace off and handed me the pretty, glittering thing. I held it in my two hands, so that the fire should fall upon it.

"Oh Connie, it's exquisite! Now, where did you get it? Surely Philip never gave you that?"

"Philip! You seem to think that Philip is the very centre and sun of my existence. My dear, Philip not only could not give it to me, but if he could he wouldn't. He would preach about rainy days and other ridiculous and horrible things of the same kind. I had it given to me—by a man who admires me, who likes me."

"Connie, you don't mean to say that you, a married woman——"

"Don't take presents from a man? My dear, what antiquated notions you have! Why, all the women take presents from the men, if they can get them."

"Well, perhaps trifles, but not a thing of such value as this."

"Oh, you are silly!"

"Who was it?"

"Well—I can't tell you that. He's a man I know—a man who admires me, thinks I am utterly thrown away on Philip, of course."

"And his price, Connie?"

"His price? My favor! That's all the price he asks or wants."

"Connie, my dear, don't believe it for a moment. When a man takes to giving a woman who isn't his wife, and never can be his wife, jewels worth hundreds of pounds, there's something wrong. If there's nothing wrong with her, then there's something wrong in his mind. He has a wrong motive, a wrong meaning; it's a bribe."

"Oh, you dear, antiquated, silly old thing! Give it me back. Really, Joan, my dear, little, unsophisticated sister, you might have been brought up in Arcadia, or any other ridiculous and outlandish spot where nobody has ever done anything and everybody stodges on in the same eternal round of domesticity from the end of one century to that of another. To think that you, the daughter of a Bohemian, the daughter of two Bohemians, smiled upon by Aunt Margaret, the most unconventional old cat that ever breathed, living from hand to mouth, living in an artistic set—oh, you're too funny, too funny!"

I handed her back the string of glittering brilliants, which seemed to burn my fingers as they touched them. I noticed, as she clasped the necklace round her throat, that she was wearing a great many rings—more, I am sure, than I had ever seen her wear before.

"You've got some new rings, Connie," I said.

She finished fastening the necklace, and then held her two hands up, looking down upon the rings which ornamented them. "Yes, I don't know that you've seen these—all of them."

"Did Philip give one to you?"

"How you do harp upon Philip! My dear, Philip gave me nothing, except a lecture."

"Philip gave you nothing?"

"He didn't."

"Philip didn't give you a Christmas present?"

"No. It's true I told him I wouldn't take it if he did, and that he could spare himself the bother."

"I can't believe it."

"No, I dare say not. I always told you it wasn't all beer and skittles being Mrs. Philip Stonor, and that I saved you a lot when I caught his fickle fancy. By the bye, he wants to paint your portrait."

"Yes, he told me so."

"Are you going to let him?"

"I don't—I don't see the good of it."

"Neither do I. He'll probably make you look a fright. He made me such a fright that I refused to go on with the sittings."

"You can't tell from a half-finished portrait what the end will be like."

"No, perhaps not, but I didn't like the look of it half way, and it



bored me to death sitting, so I told him he could paint it out—put somebody else on the same canvas. Perhaps he means to use it up for you. Has it ever struck you that there is a fatality about the name of Philip?"

"What nonsense!"

"Yes, Philips are seldom lucky; and, somehow, in history they always, or nearly always, have some qualifying term tacked on to their name. There was Philippe le Bon, and there was Philip the Unready."

"I never heard of him," I remarked.

"No? He was there all the same. I call my lord and master Philip the Dissatisfied."

## XII.

Not very long after Christmas my mother was taken ill and died; that is to say, she seemed suddenly to collapse, and in a very few hours had sunk into a state of extreme illness, from which she never rallied. The end, though in some senses a relief, was a great shock and a grief to us all. My two younger sisters were hastily summoned home from school, and Aunt Margaret came and went from morning till night, helping and comforting us in every possible way. She even forbore quarrelling with Connie, who was, perhaps, more upset than any of us. She was at the theatre when the last change came, and when she arrived about midnight, coming post-haste in a cab, all was over, and she was too late to see our mother alive again.

I shall never forget that night. She flung herself down by the bed on which mother lay, so calm and still, in a transport of the most extravagant grief.

"Connie, Connie, don't grieve like that," I entreated, putting my arms around her. "Think of what she has been these years past; think that she has gone to father, that they are together again; that she is at peace, at rest, with her dear mind as unclouded as it used to be when we were children. Don't grudge it to her, dear; don't grudge it."

She rose from the floor to her knees, looking long and earnestly at mother's dead, white face. Then she got up and laid her hands upon those crossed so quietly on the meek breast.

"The last barrier has gone," she said. "I have been holding back for fear mother should know, and I would not add one bit to her sorrows. Now it is all over, all at an end; the last barrier is broken down."

"My dear girl, what do you mean? What barrier? I don't understand you," I cried.

She turned and looked mournfully at me. "You don't understand? No, you little saint, you don't understand anything about me. You will know later on when you hear everything, you will remember—you will not forget—that I endured everything for mother's sake

until now." Then she turned back to the bed again. "Good-by, my darling, my dear, dear mother. You, who were so good to us when we were little and stupid and troublesome, you are out of it now; you will never know. If you do, you will be able to understand and to forgive."

Then she turned and walked out of the room. I stayed to touch the flowers here and there with which we had strewn the bed, and to draw the sheet over her face again. Then I too went out, shutting the door behind me.

I found Connie talking quite calmly and civilly to Aunt Margaret. "I shall get a Persian lamb's wool coat," she was saying. "There are still three months of biting weather before us."

"H'm, thirty guineas!" said Aunt Margaret.

"Thereabouts," said Connie indifferently. "Oh, here's Joan. Well, dearest, I'll come round to-morrow morning, and then we can settle anything that has yet to be arranged. I kept my cab. Good-night, Aunt Margaret."

"Good-night," returned Aunt Margaret.

"By the bye, Joan," said Connie to me, as we passed into the narrow entrance hall, "why isn't Philip here? I thought he was with you."

"He was, dear; he's gone. He's only been gone a few minutes. He thought you would go home first."

"Oh, all right. I only wondered. Good-night, Joan dear." And then she whisked out and into the cab and was gone.

"I cannot understand," said Aunt Margaret, when I went back into the dining-room, "what has happened to Connie. She took your lover from you, and she's been like a soul in purgatory ever since. Nothing seems to touch her."

"Oh, I don't know."

"Nothing! She just walked into the room, spoke to me in her indifferent, callous kind of way, and said, 'So poor mother has gone!' and that was all."

"Oh, you don't understand Connie," I said. "You and she get on each other's nerves. Connie feels it very deeply. But she's like that with you. With people who are not sympathetic to her, she seems to dry up. I don't know why you should have that effect upon her. You never had upon me—no, not the first day when you came, and poor father was lying dead. I shall never forget it,—how good you were to me and to her and to all of us. But you seem to get on Connie's nerves. I don't know why you should, dear, but you do, or she on yours, or both; but, believe me, Connie is not indifferent about our mother."

"She is what I call indifferent," said Aunt Margaret, sticking to

her point. "Opinions differ, of course, but I call her the height of indifference, not only about your poor mother, but about everything else,—about her husband into the bargain."

"Don't talk about that," I cried. "It's bad enough to-night, desolate enough, without talking over things which cannot be avoided and cannot be undone. Leave it all, Aunt Margaret; let them stand over for to-night at least."

"Well, child, I had no wish to make any disagreeableness; you have enough on your hands just now without that. I'll be off home. No, I don't want anybody to come with me. An ugly old woman like me is perfectly capable of walking three streets without an escort. Good-night, my child; God bless you!"

I saw her to the door, and when she had gone I drew the bolts and made all secure for the night. I had scarcely reached the dining-room when there came a gentle rap at the door that I had just closed. I knew that it was Philip.

"Is that you, Philip?" I asked through the door.

"Yes."

I undid the bolts and flung the door open wide. "Connie has been gone some little time."

"Oh! She came here then?"

"Yes. She kept her cab and went home in it."

"I see. I left home half-an-hour ago. I had somewhere to go. I thought perhaps she might be here or that you might want something."

He came in and followed me into the dining-room. "Is there nothing I can do for you, Joan?" he inquired.

"Nothing. I think you'd better go home. Connie was terribly cut up when she found that all was over."

"Was she?"

"Terribly! I never saw her in such a state. Be kind to her, Philip; she has need of it."

He uttered an exclamation. "Oh, you needn't tell me that. I don't beat her or keep her without food, nor lock her out, nor anything else outrageous. I'll be polite and civil to her when I go in. That's all Connie cares about now."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that practically she and I have done with each other."

"Oh, no, Philip, no."

"Yes. She told me yesterday that the fear of adding to her mother's past troubles and disturbing her last days was the only thing that kept her to me; that as for me, she wished that she had never seen me; that she was sick of me, tired of me, that I bored her to extinction; that she would be glad if she knew that she would

never see me again. I made a mistake, Joan, when I fell in love with Connie."

"It's a mistake that you must both abide by."

"Yes, in a way I suppose it is. I'm content enough to do so—at least, if not content, I'm willing. I don't think that Connie is. Don't mistake me. I'm not pining after Connie's love. I found out long ago what a hollow mockery and pretence it all was. I made a hideous mistake, and I'm prepared to stand by it just so long as she wills it, but that is all. I've found out now that I was never really in love with Connie."

"But you mustn't say so to me."

"No, I suppose not. A man must never tell the truth when he comes to the most desperate situation of his life."

I put my hand upon his arm. "Philip," I said, "you took Connie as Connie took you—for better, for worse. You were in love with her, heart and soul, as you never were at any time with me. I know what you mean when you say a man must not speak in the most desperate situation of his life. It means that you want to tell me that you would like to be back on the old footing. Well, that's impossible. The old footing can never come back again."

"There is some man, I know, that Connie is mixed up with. He gives her valuable jewelry and other things."

"Philip, you must stop it. You must win Connie back again, whether you care what she feels or not."

"I would have done so——"

"There is no 'would have done so,' you *must* do it. It is your due to me. It is due to my honor and to my dead mother's honor that you should do everything in your power to keep your wife—for she is your wife—in the right path; and nothing could make me hate you so thoroughly as to know that you had deliberately allowed my sister to drift on to her ruin. I will do everything that I possibly can to preserve her; you must do the same. And now you must go,—I'm dreadfully tired,—but before you go make me a promise that you will safeguard her by every means in your power."

"Yes, I will do the best I can. You are quite right, it is your due; and though of late I have felt as if I should be justified in letting her drift where she would, I will do my best to hold her back, only I'm afraid that it will be no good."

"What is it that has come between you?"

"I don't know—partly ambition, partly because I have disappointed her—I mean, personally; we have no tastes in common; I'm not well off—not what she calls well off, that is. I have to think twice before taking a cab; I can't give her diamond necklaces and sets of sable. I have to work for every penny I make. Connie's a star by

nature; she wants to shine. It's not vanity, it's disposition. I never met anybody less vain; I've never met anyone more absolutely ambitious."

"Philip, who is the man?"

"Ah, that the rub. I didn't know until yesterday; she kept it so dark, such a secret. If she chooses to go, I've not a chance against him."

"What is his name?"

"Lord Schovel. You've seen him, of course?"

"No, never."

"Well, he's everything that a girl would like—young, handsome, rich, and an earl to boot. What chance have I, a poor black-and-white artist, against such a man as that?"

"Only the chance of honor," said I.

### XIII.

AFTER the funeral was over I had a long business talk with Aunt Margaret.

"Joan, my child," she said, "it is absolutely necessary that we should talk over the situation."

"I am quite ready, Aunt Margaret," I replied.

"Well, what little your mother had was, of course, left to her with reversion to you children. It was little enough, God knows,—not enough to dress any one of you,—but such as it is, it will, of course, have to be divided. I suppose your trustee will be able to allow the use of it in the case of Gracie and Mona towards the general expenses, but I am not at all sure on that point. The question is this: I really can't afford to allow one penny more than I've been doing all these years since your father died."

"I think it's awfully hard on you, Aunt Margaret," I burst out.

"Tut, tut! We don't want to hear any of that. It was my duty, and I've done it, and I must say, so far as you and the children are concerned, I've had the greatest pleasure in doing it. I'm not pleased with Connie; I'll not pretend that I am. I never sham; I'm not a humbug. I don't like the way Connie is carrying on, and I am not going to pretend that I do. Besides, she's provided for, and I wash my hands of her. With regard to you three, you get this house very cheap; I think you'd better go on exactly as you have been doing all these years."

"Don't you think, Aunt Margaret, that I ought to be doing something?"

"Well, I don't know that you ought. You see, you're not free of your family yet. I've been thinking things over, and I'm sure we might make a change which would be beneficial all round in this way.

I think you'd better keep on in this house for the present, because I'm an old woman and I must have my place to myself. I couldn't bear a couple of young things—sixteen and eleven—coming in and turning everything upside down. I don't know that I should mind you, but you've had enough drag on you with your mother. You don't want to drag after an old woman and cut out your life to suit her whims and caprices."

"But to keep this house on all for me——"

"Well, it isn't all for you, child, at all. In the first place, when I sent the children to school it was because I didn't think it was right or just to them that they should be continually in the house with a woman who was—well, like your poor mother was; and I thought it would be more healthy and more wholesome for them if they were away for the greater part of the year. It was bad enough for you, but you were older; they were at the most impressionable age. However, I must say that I don't see the good,—or, at least, I don't see the necessity,—of keeping those two at an expensive boarding-school any longer. They could quite well live at home and go to a good day-school in the neighborhood. Then you would have something to occupy you, and they would have a little home life, of which, poor children, they've not had much so far, and it wouldn't cost any more—no, I don't think it would cost any more, and I think, on the whole, it might cost even a little less. You see, the school is expensive; you can't turn children out without their being provided for like all the other children, and if they live at home, they won't need as many expensive clothes as they have done at school. Again, they would doubtless get better food for less cost. I think if they go back until Easter that that will be our best plan."

"When do you think they ought to go back?"

"Oh, well, they can't go back for a week or two. Let me see; Easter falls early this year. Upon my word, I don't think it's worth while their going back at all. I'll go and see Mrs. Woods and square up with her to Easter. I don't suppose, under the circumstances, there will be any trouble about taking them away; and until Easter, Joan, let them run wild. It won't hurt them."

For a moment I didn't speak; then at last I looked up at her.

"Aunt Margaret," I said, "I want to say something to you, and I can't."

"Dear me, I've never found you wanting in speech before," was Aunt Margaret's blunt rejoinder.

"No, perhaps you haven't, but this is a difficult thing to say."

"Well, out with it; get it off your mind."

"Well, first of all, Aunt Margaret, I want to thank you for all your goodness to us."



"I don't want to hear any thanks. We will consider all that as said—'taken as read' is the usual phrase,—taken as read."

"That wasn't quite all I wanted to say, Aunt Margaret."

"No? Well, can't you take the other as read also?"

"Not exactly. It's a less pleasant thing to have to say; perhaps it will be a less pleasant thing for you to hear, but I must say it. Aunt Margaret, I'm very uneasy about Connie."

"Are you? I don't wonder at it, because you're a good girl; you're good right through, inside and out, to your finger-tips, to the ends of your hair; but it's no use worrying yourself about Connie. She's beyond your calculations. She's gone her own gait, she's made her own bed, she's sown her own crop; she must keep the pace she's set, she must lie on the bed she's made, she must reap the harvest she's sown. Those are the inevitable laws of nature; we must all abide by them."

"Can nothing be done?"

"I should say not. Neither she nor Stonor deserves any better fate than has come to them. I have never forgiven them and I never shall. It's no use your asking me. They married in defiance of all codes of honor. Connie didn't hesitate to take the one man in the world that she should not have taken, that she should not have looked at; he didn't hesitate—but there, I can't talk about him. I'm angry with her, but I'm much more angry with him. She was only a giddy girl; he was a grown man, a man of the world. He knew; it is just possible that she didn't."

"I wish you wouldn't blame them both so much," I said. "Whatever they did, right or wrong, was done for all time. It was done then with a good motive. They may have been mistaken."

"They were."

"Well, yes, I'm afraid they were; but, oh Aunt Margaret, cannot something be done to stop her on the headlong course that she is running now? They were fond of each other when they married, and now it seems as if both——"

"My dear child," broke in Aunt Margaret impatiently, "can water turn backward? When you've blown out a match, will it light again of itself? Does time stand still? Is yesterday the same as to-morrow? No, no, most emphatically no. Leave them to stew in their own juice, my dear; don't you bother your head about them. You might as well dip your finger in a running stream and expect to dam it. You couldn't do it if the stream was in its normal condition; but when the stream is a swollen torrent, your little finger is about as much use as a knitting-needle. Connie is married, Connie has left the home nest, Connie has got a lawful and legitimate protector. You have nothing to do with her in law now, and you'd better have nothing to do with

her in any other capacity. You have two younger sisters to care for, to think for, to watch over, to warn; that's enough occupation for a young girl like you. It's no use wasting your time and strength upon Connie. Neither of them will thank you."

"I don't know. Philip spoke to me the other night——"

"Then Philip ought to be ashamed of himself. Philip is a grown man of six- or seven-and-twenty. He ought to be able to manage his wife without coming mewling and puling to you about it. I haven't patience with him."

"Connie is so unreasonable."

"Well, let him bring her to reason. He doesn't treat her properly. He should lock her up in a room and feed her on bread and water."

"Oh Aunt Margaret!"

"Yes, he should; anything would be justifiable under the circumstances. But it's no use your breaking yourself on that wheel. Take my advice: drop it, let them look after themselves, don't you trouble about them."

I knew that there was no more to be got out of Aunt Margaret. I could not quarrel with her over it, because she had been so good in other ways, but she was so unreasonable where Connie was concerned. I knew it was because she was fond of me that she felt like this towards my sister; I knew that she resented Philip's having left me. She told me once that I had no spirit because I didn't quarrel with him and say bitter things to him. But what would have been the good of that? Besides, I didn't feel like quarrelling. With me, love once given was given for always, not on lease, as it were; and if Philip had been happy with my sister, I should have been content—perfectly content—in the knowledge that they were happy. Oh, I don't say that it wasn't bitter to me to see my lover, or rather him who had been my lover, wrapped up heart and soul in another; I don't say that it wasn't bitter to go into church and see him bridegroom to my sister; I don't pretend that I didn't feel to the very depths of my heart the bitterness of being forsaken, because that wouldn't be true; but if it was to make him happy, if I had known for certain that his whole earthly happiness was in my sister's hands, I would have preferred that she should have him rather than that he should feel himself irrevocably bound to me. I suppose I was a poor thing and had no spirit, but that was how I was born. I could no more help it than Aunt Margaret could help being blunt and brusque.

I determined, therefore, now that I was much more free of home ties, having, indeed, none that would not arrange themselves to my convenience, to go a great deal more to my sister's house. I would keep a close watch upon her. She should not go headlong over the precipice of wrong if I could stretch out a hand to save her.

I accordingly went round to Gleeson Grove that very afternoon. Connie was at home and alone. She was resting in a big chair by a good fire in the drawing-room; she had the latest novel in her hand.

"Oh, is that you, dear old Joan? I'm so pleased to see you. Fraser, bring some tea, and, Fraser, some of that cake that came yesterday, you know."

"Yes, Madam."

"I've had some most wonderful cakes sent to me. Dear Joan," she went on, putting her hand on my arm, "I'm so pleased to see you. I was so dull, I thought once or twice of coming round; then I thought that that tiresome old Aunt Margaret would be there, and she, of course, would effectually spoil any pleasure I might derive from the visit."

"Aunt Margaret has been there to-day. I wish you didn't dislike her so much, Connie."

"My dear, I don't dislike her so very much; it's she who dislikes me."

"You ought not to, because you are greatly beholden to her."

"Yes, dear old preacher, I am; but Aunt Margaret's dislike of me is so pronounced that I should be downright rude if I were to force myself upon her. See?"

"Well, I wish you didn't hate each other so much. She's been talking about you this afternoon."

"I'm sure she's been saying nothing pleasant."

"Oh, well, we'll not go into that. Connie, I've got something to tell you: Aunt Margaret is going to keep on the house for us."

"You don't say so? Good old girl! She's better than I thought she was. Look out you don't offend her, because, if you do, there's an implacable enemy ready made."

"I shall not offend her, poor Aunt Margaret. We have been talking things over. She thinks the girls will be better at home and going to a good day-school."

"So do I. They don't feed you at that place at Seven Oaks. Unlimited diet! Ugh! Makes my gorge rise to think about it. It's very cold out, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is. You've got a very thin dress on, Connie."

"Yes, I like to keep the rooms warm and to have my dress rather thin, and wear plenty of furs when I go out. It seems to me more sensible than wearing thick woollen garments indoors. Do you like my dress?"

"It's very pretty—must have cost a great deal of money."

"Oh, not so much."

"Those pearls look so nice round your neck." I put out my hand and touched a row of large pearls which encircled her slender throat.

"How marvellously they get these things up nowadays. Nobody would believe they were not real."

"No, my dear, they wouldn't. The finest expert in London wouldn't believe they were not real."

"Connie——"

"Well?"

"You don't mean to say those are real?"

"Don't I? Oh my dear, they're real enough."

#### XIV.

DURING the next few weeks I lived with my heart in my mouth. I was determined to save my sister if it were possible to do so. She was equally determined to go her own way and brook no interference. She was never the least little bit out of temper with me; oh, no, she merely laughed at everything I said, jeered at me for an old-fashioned piece of goods, a born old maid; told me I was three centuries behind the times, and that I could very well trust her to shape her own life to the most desirable end.

I went continually to Gleeson Grove. I used to say that I was dull at home; that the girls, being so much nearer to each other, were no companions for me; that I missed having mother to attend to. I made a thousand and one excuses which would take me to my sister's house. When she was at home, she always professed herself delighted to see me, and in that she seemed sincere enough. I sometimes found other people there, but never the man whose name Philip had told me, the man who was Philip's most dangerous rival—Lord Schovel.

I didn't often see Philip. He was always shut up in the studio, working hard.

"Wrapped up heart and soul in his work," Connie said one day to a lady who came in and inquired for him. "Oh, no, I never see him—now and again at meals. That's the worst of husbands and wives having different professions. He's working all day-light, and I'm working all gas-light."

"What a pity, my dear. You ought to have married an actor."

"Yes, I suppose I ought. Then we should have had engagements in different theatres, or else made ourselves ridiculous by vowing that we would never play except in the same piece. Oh my dear lady, things are as they are. Don't you begin lecturing me. I get enough from my sister here."

"Your sister doesn't look as if she could read you a lecture."

"Oh, doesn't she? Then she belies her looks, that's all. I believe she's got one on the tip of her tongue now, only you are here, so she can't deliver herself of it."

At this everybody laughed, and then Philip came in. His entrance

was a little unexpected. He seldom showed when Connie had any of her friends about her. She, however, introduced him to everybody with a charming air,—quite that of the adoring young wife,—and the lady who had last spoken at once enlightened him as to the nature of the conversation which he had interrupted.

"We were just speaking about you, Mr. Stonor," she said.

"Really? I hope you were speaking pleasantly."

"Well, we were and we weren't. We were saying what a pity it is that you and your wife are not of the same profession. As she says, you work all the day-light, and she all the gas-light."

"Yes. One must work to live, Mrs. Garnett."

"That's so in these hard times; you're quite right. Your wife, of course, is so wrapped up in her profession that nothing would induce her to give it up."

"No, I have tried. I found it quite impossible. I suppose most ladies in the profession are. Shouldn't like it myself, but that's neither here nor there."

"Ah, you don't realize yet what the profession is," Mrs. Garnett went on blandly. "It gives such scope, such opportunities."

"It does, indeed," said Philip. "I quite agree with you—opportunities which would never occur in any other walk in life. I'll have a cup of tea, if you please, Connie."

She poured out a cup of tea, and he drank it standing. I knew that something out of the ordinary had happened. I wished all these chattering people would go, so that I might have some explanation of the new look upon Philip's face. They stayed, however, talking nonsense, chatting idly, until perilously near Connie's dinner-hour. Then they went off as if by magic. I suppose, all belonging to the same walk in life, that they too had a dinner to eat at the hour which Philip considered abnormally early.

"You'll stay to dinner with us?" said Connie to me.

"I'll stay while you have your dinner, Connie, if you like, but I must be home by half-past seven, for we have supper then, and I'm sure the girls would wait for me."

The maid announced that dinner was served, and my sister led the way into the dining-room, chattering gayly as she went.

"You'd better change your mind and have some dinner. You'll have lots of time to get home before the supper-hour, or is it too early for you?" she asked.

"Oh, I can eat my dinner as well one time as another."

"It's more than I can," said Philip.

An impatient look flitted across my sister's beautiful face.

"Yes, that's an old story, Philip, my friend. He is still Philip the Dissatisfied, you see—so hard to live up to."

"I don't think you find it very hard, because you never try," put in Philip. "However, we need not entertain Joan with our differences in that respect."

"No, dear. It's the greatest mistake to do laundry work in public. I always told you so, if you remember. I always tell everybody outside that I've the most charming husband in London, so clever,—'Not with me to-day, dear Lady So-and-so. So wrapped up in his work—couldn't get him out of the studio.' Then Lady So-and-so says something civil about my surely not finding any difficulty in making my bear dance which way I will. I don't know whether they believe it or not," she wound up.

"It's quite immaterial," remarked Philip. "By the bye, will you come straight home from the theatre to-night?"

"I'm sorry, I can't."

"Why not?"

"Because I have an engagement."

"Oh! I particularly wanted you to do so, because I've got a couple of men coming in rather late."

"Do you want supper? It can easily be got, you know, only you'd better let them know before the shops are shut. A lobster—a salad—a raised pie. Will that do you? A few olives—a pot of caviare?"

"Yes, that will do admirably, if you will let cook know, because I've a big commission hanging on it. You can't be back?"

"I'm sorry, dear boy, I can't. I've a most important engagement of weeks' standing. Tell Fraser to be sure to make the table look nice. You'll do just as well without me—rather better, I should think. I don't understand art, you know," she said, turning to me. "Somehow I always seem to say the wrong thing. A painter's wife ought to understand painting. I suppose it is for a painting, not for black-and-white work?"

"No, for a painting. Then you won't come back?"

"My dear boy, I tell you I can't," she said quite shortly. "How silly it is of you to keep on harping on the same string when I tell you it's impossible. Do you think I don't know the value of words? I have a most particular engagement."

"With Schovel?"

"Never mind. I have an engagement; that's enough. I don't ask you who your friends are; you need not ask me with whom my engagements are. It's immaterial. I can't come; I cannot be at home to-night."

Philip bit his lip and sat looking darkly at his plate. I glanced from the one to the other,—husband and wife, yet as wide apart as the poles,—and I could not find a single word which would help one or the other. Presently she looked at the clock.



"You must excuse me, Joan, my time has come." She rose from her seat, a tall, lily-fair figure in her clinging black draperies. "Come up with me while I put on my things, Joan. Since you're eating so little, it won't matter not staying to the end."

"Yes, I'll come."

Philip got up too. He held out his hand to her. "Then you won't come back?" he said pointedly.

"I can't," she answered. "I've already told you so."

"Very well; good-by."

"Good-by."

She had opened the door for herself, and as I passed out behind her I saw that he flung himself back into his chair. I shut the door quietly behind me.

"Why does he want you so particularly to-night?"

"Goodness knows! Some freak or another. Always the same—Philip the Dissatisfied."

"Why can't you give up your engagement, Connie?"

"Because I don't choose to. Life wouldn't be worth having if I were at Philip's beck and call. If he had told me a week ago that he had men, important men, coming to supper with him to-night, I might have arranged otherwise, but he springs it upon me at dinner-time the same evening. Why, it's ridiculous! No wife would stand it unless she was a mere domesticated animal, a sort of pussy-cat in the house. I'm not that kind of animal; I never was, I never shall be."

"I thought that Philip had some other meaning."

"Oh, no, that's only Philip's tragic way. I hate a man with a tragedy manner. It bores one so. Oh, how cold it is! How glad I am to have a decent fur garment to keep me warm."

She had fixed a large black hat upon her head with a couple of glittering pins, and as she spoke she slipped into a long silken coat, lined with fur. It was a bewildering garment—dark sable, black lace, and white chiffon seemed to be mixed up in inextricable confusion. She took her gloves and handkerchief from where they were laid upon the bed, and then touched the bell.

"Have you got me a cab, Fraser?"

"Yes, Madam."

"Then take my bag down."

"Why are you taking your bag, Connie?" I asked.

"Oh, I want it at the theatre to-night. I sometimes have to take things with me."

Her tone was carelessness itself. She bade me good-by when we reached the hall and told me that she would come and see me in a day or two. Then I went back into the dining-room to get my coat.

"Has she gone?" asked Philip.

"Yes, she's gone."

"You gathered the truth, of course?" he said, turning in his chair to look at me.

"The truth? No! What do you mean?"

"She's gone!"

"I don't understand you. Of course she's gone; she goes every night."

"Yes, but to-night she has gone in a different way. She's gone for good."

"How do you know? Was that why you were so anxious she should come back to supper?"

"Of course it was."

I caught him by the shoulder. "You mean that your wife has gone out of your house—to somebody else?"

"I do."

"How do you know?"

"I had information of it this afternoon. Several things bore it out. You heard what she said?"

"She knew that you knew?"

"I should say so. I did my best, you must admit, to make her promise to come back. You saw how little it availed."

"Philip," I said to him, "I'm going down to the theatre now. I must save my sister at any cost. You will receive her if I bring her back?"

## XV.

I LEFT Philip without another word after he had given me his promise that he would receive Connie if I could induce her to return home with me that night. I jumped into the first cab I saw, and bade the man drive me home, where I told my young sisters that I had some important business connected with Connie to attend to, that they must have their supper without me.

"Have you had supper, Joan?" Gracie demanded.

"I had dinner with Connie, dear. Now you have supper and amuse yourself, and go to bed if I'm not back. I'll look into your room as soon as I come in. I may be late. I cannot say."

"Is anything the matter with Connie?" Mona asked.

"Nothing, dear. It's only some business I have to do for her. Don't worry yourself at all. Yes, I've got a cab. Good-night, darlings."

"Good-night."

I ran out of the house again and got into the cab. "Drive me to the Queen's Theatre. Lose no time," I said.

The man was willing and his horse fast. I reached the Queen's

Theatre a few minutes after the curtain went up. I walked straight into the box office.

"I want to see Miss Standing," I said.

"Miss Standing? That's quite impossible, Madam," was the reply.

"I must see her. It's a question of life and death; it is absolutely essential."

"You cannot see Miss Standing during the performance. While the performance is going on, nobody can go behind," the man replied.

"Oh, dear, what shall I do? It's most important,—a family matter, a question of the very gravest kind. What time will she have finished? Can I see her then?"

"Well, Madam, I don't know. Visitors are not allowed behind at all. If you will give me your name and will write a line, I will ask the manager."

"I am Miss Standing's sister."

"Oh, I see. Well, write your name on this piece of paper and put 'On urgent business at the earliest possible moment.' Perhaps, I dare say, Miss Warrender will make an exception in your favor. In the mean time,—the house is not particularly full,—would you like to see the performance?"

"I have seen it. I may as well see it again," I replied. "But you will send to Miss Warrender at once? Miss Standing is off early in the third act, isn't she? Couldn't I be allowed to see her then? Do use your influence with Miss Warrender. Believe me, it is of the gravest and deepest importance."

"I will go round and tell Miss Warrender myself. I shall be free in less than half-an-hour; I will go then. If you will take this stall, Madam, I will send round to you as soon as I have seen Miss Warrender."

"Thank you so much."

There was nothing for it but to take my hat off and go to the seat which the good gentleman in charge of the box office had allotted to me. And there I sat alone, my heart full to overflowing, wondering if I should be able to prevail, understanding then clearly why Connie had taken her dressing-bag with her, my head on fire, my whole being in a tumult.

And I watched my sister. She played her little part very daintily and prettily, but that was all. Then I became aware that she was playing to one man in a box on the prompt side, and that the man in the box was sitting, watching her keenly, eagerly, exclusively. Could that be Lord Schovel? If so, well, he was just the kind of man to have taken a young girl's fancy. I could hardly take my eyes off him. At the conclusion of the second act the gentleman whom I had seen in the box office came round to my stall.

"Under the circumstances, Miss Warrender will allow you to go to Miss Standing's dressing-room as soon as she has made her final exit," he said. "She sends you her compliments, Madam, and she is sure you will understand that it would not do for her to have allowed you to go round now, lest you should unnerve Miss Standing for her part. For the same reason she has not told her that you have asked to see her."

"Miss Warrender is very good," I said. "Will you give her my most grateful thanks?"

"Certainly, Madam. You know, perhaps, when Miss Standing makes her final exit?"

"Yes, oh, yes; I've seen the piece twice."

"Then if you will come out to me, I will take you round at once."

"Thank you very much. I will come as soon as I see her go."

It seemed a long time. I saw that the man in the box on the grand tier went out for the whole interval, coming back only when Connie was about to appear again. Then she made her final exit, upon which the man in the box immediately disappeared. I too left my stall, and sought my friend at the box office.

"Come this way, Madam," he said, in brisk, cheerful tones. "Miss Standing will be in her dressing-room alone, because the lady with whom she dresses is on until the very end of the piece."

I followed him up several shabby passages and a dingy flight of uncarpeted stairs. He warned me here and there not to knock my head, and, finally, preceded me down another narrow passage and rapped imperatively upon a door which was standing a couple of inches open.

"Who is it?" said Connie's voice.

"Mr. Fox."

"What do you want?"

"Are you alone, Miss Standing?"

"Yes."

"Here's a lady to see you."

"Oh lor! Show her in."

He stepped aside, and I entered the room.

"Joan! You! What's the matter? Has anything happened?"

I shut the door behind me and went up to my sister. "Nothing has happened so far. It depends upon you whether anything is going to happen this night. Connie, as soon as you had left the house Philip told me everything. You are not going back again. You intend to leave him."

"Well, what if I do?" she demanded defiantly.

"Connie, you can't do it. You must not do it. I am your sister. You must come back."

"It's too late."

"No, Connie, it's never too late. Come back home. Philip is waiting to receive you. Oh my sister, for the love of the mother for whom we are both wearing this mourning, let me entreat you to come home. Don't go away with this man, whoever he is. I saw him to-night, sitting up in that box alone, devouring you with his wicked eyes. Connie, come back; come home."

"My dear," she said, putting her hands on my shoulders and holding me at arm's length, "you ask what is impossible. He is not wicked. He is a straight, good, clean, honorable man. He is the man I ought to have married. I cannot go back to Philip. It's degradation living with a man that you don't love any more."

"How do you know that you love this one? How do you know that you will go on loving him?"

"Well, I don't know. I've got to take the risk of that; I've got to chance it, as every woman does when she has to do with a man. If I go back to Philip, I shall go back to moral hell. I shall hate him and you and myself and my life—everyone, everything. God knows what will become of me! If I go away, I make a clean start; I shall have all the things that I've wanted all my life, that I've wanted most; I shall have a man who doesn't bore me; I shall have a man who suits me, who will live for me, who will exist for me."

"So he says."

"Ah, my dear, they all act differently from what they say, your peerless Philip among the rest. I have been wise in my generation. I have told Lord Schovel that I shall not go to him without a huge settlement, and it is to be signed at twelve o'clock to-night. Then I've done with my past; then I give up this life, the old life at home, everything that has worried and bored and chafed me, and I start afresh."

"How can you start afresh—you, the wife of another man?"

"Well, that can be remedied in time. He'll divorce me, of course. I've gone over it all; I've counted the cost."

"Do you understand that you will be outcast?"

"Well, I should have been fifty years ago. One's not particularly outcast nowadays because one leaves an uncongenial marriage for another one. That's a little far-fetched. I shall be another of 'em for a time, but I shall not feel that as I feel the daily, hourly irksomeness of living as Philip Stonor's wife. I can't go on any longer. I did the wrong thing when I took him from you. You were the wife for him, not I."

The thought flashed into my mind that she was like the child who, after a long struggle, seizes a lovely butterfly, crushes it in its little hand, and then throws it away because its beauty is spoiled forever. So she had taken my lover from me. She was as innocent as the child who chases and captures the butterfly. She didn't even now seem to

realize all that she had done. I made a last effort to get her to reconsider her decision.

"Connie," I said, "if you have no thought for yourself, none for me, have you no respect for the memory of our dead mother?"

"I haven't. Poor mother! She was good and kind and sweet, but she married the man of her heart. I didn't."

"Have you got a heart, Connie?"

"No, dear, I don't think I have. I think I was born without one."

"And yet you seemed so much in love with Philip."

"I suppose I did; perhaps I was. I was mistaken, that's all. I don't think it's in me to love very deeply."

"Connie, there are two young sisters to think of."

"Are there? I don't see what difference it will make to them."

"Don't you? Anybody else would."

"Well, I think myself that the Countess of Schovel is more likely to be of use to her sisters than Mrs. Philip Stonor was able to be."

"How do you know that he will make you the Countess of Schovel?"

"Because, my dear, he is hideously, hopelessly, desperately gone. He's making an enormous settlement on me—six thousand a year. If he suddenly turned virtuous, or changed his mind and didn't make me the Countess of Schovel, why, I should be able to do a great deal with six thousand a year."

"How do you know that Philip will divorce you?"

"I am certain that he will. He told me that he would."

"What! You have talked this over with him?"

"Not as I am talking it over with you—no, no; but he told me some little time ago, under certain provocation, I admit, that, if I did leave him, he should lose not a moment in freeing himself from me legally. So, my dear Joan, you may spare yourself the trouble of trying to persuade me any further. It's waste of breath. My sister, I love you, I always shall love you. I shall never forget how you came in your beautiful virtue and tried to make me see the error of my ways, how you tried to make me understand exactly what I was doing. You're a good woman, Joan; so am I, but mine is a different kind of goodness. Some people might even call me bad."

"Oh Connie, you break my heart!"

"Do I? I'm so sorry. I'm not worth breaking your heart over; believe me as to that. You've done your best, and you have failed. Well, dear old sister, go your way, content in the assurance that 'What is to be will be.'"



## XVI.

WHEN I left the Queen's Theatre that night my intention was to go back to Gleeson Grove and tell Philip how I had fared. I was dead tired, sick at heart, and worn out with my anxiety and my failure. I got into a cab at the door of the theatre, giving the man instructions to drive to Gleeson Grove, Chelsea; and as we drove through the lighted streets, and I realized what an utter failure my mission had been, I came to the conclusion that I could not face Philip that night. It was not yet very late,—not eleven o'clock. I pushed my hand up through the trap-door and gave the cabman our own address instead of my sister's.

"Wait for me," I said, when we reached the house.

I let myself in with my key, and went straight down into the kitchen.

"You have not gone to bed, Hanna?" I inquired.

"No, Miss Joan, I was just going."

"I want you to go somewhere for me. Put on your things. I have to send a note to Mr. Stonor. It is important. It's a cold night, Hanna; wrap yourself up warm."

The faithful soul hurried into her bedroom, which was next the kitchen, and I went back into the dining-room, where I knew I should find writing materials. I said:

"DEAR PHILIP: I have done my best. It's no good. I'm heart-broken. Yours,

"JOAN."

I addressed the envelope to "Philip Stonor, Esq.," and then went out to the hall, where Hanna was waiting.

"Take this round to Mr. Stonor, and let the cab bring you back."

I went out, telling the man what I wanted him to do, and paid him enough to bring Hanna back again.

"You have your key?" I said to her. "I'm going straight to bed; I'm very tired."

I was tired; I was heart-broken, heart-sick, weary of everything. I had done my best. I had wrestled, and in spirit prayed, with Connie, but it was no use. Her feet were set upon the downward path, and she was determined to tread it to the end.

I believe that I wept that night for the first time since Philip had forsaken me. I wept and wept, until at last, when the first faint streaks of dawn were shining in at the sides of the window-blinds, I fell asleep.

I woke feeling that something dreadful had happened, beaten and weary. Hanna was standing by my bedside with a cup of tea and some toast upon a plate.

"Is it very late, Hanna?"

"Well, it is rather late, Miss Joan," she replied. "The young ladies have gone off to school quite quietly. I would lie still a bit if I were you and rest yourself."

There was nothing for me to do, and I thought I might as well lie and rest, but I felt as if I should never rest again. I didn't move for an hour or so. Then I got up and dressed, wondering all the while what would happen next.

About eleven o'clock Philip came. "I came to tell you," he said, "that, of course, it's all over. She went to Paris last night with Schovel. She's laid her plans with the greatest care. She's done nothing in a hurry. You have nothing to reproach yourself with. If human aid could have saved her, you would have done so."

"Oh Philip, you might have done so much," I cried.

"I might. I did. I did my best; no man can do more. It was a mistake, a fatal mistake. I can only now do my best to repair the mischief that our marriage did. It's the only service that I can render her, and this is her last letter to me. I received it by messenger this morning."

I took the letter which he held out to me. It was, of course, in Connie's handwriting. It said:

"DEAR PHILIP: I decided some time ago that we could not continue the cat-and-dog life that we have been leading of late. Our marriage was the greatest mistake that either of us ever made or ever will make while we live. The only service that I can render you is to leave you, and the only favor you can do me is to divorce me as quickly as possible. By the time you get this I shall be out of England. You will find me with Lord Schovel at the Continental in Paris. I won't apologize to you for the step I've taken, or attempt to excuse myself or proffer you my pity or waste further time in words. I am sure that you will be as glad to be rid of me as I shall be to be free of you. In your way you have been good to me lately, and I must thank you for that. I'm sorry I turned out such a bad spec, but you'll soon forget me when we are finally free of each other. Yours sincerely,

"CONNIE."

I had nothing to say. I folded the letter and replaced it in its envelope, and gave it back to Philip.

"Well?" he said harshly.

"Well?" I said.

"Of course, I shall do as she wishes; I shall divorce her as soon as possible."

"I suppose you must."

There was silence between us for a moment. Then I suddenly turned towards him and put my hands out. "Philip," I said, "don't

do it. Go to Paris and fetch her back again. Let nobody know. It will touch her if she finds you are ready to forgive her."

He looked at me for a moment incredulously. "Joan," he said, "didn't you read her letter? Don't you realize that Connie has gone of her own will, that nothing will bring her back again? Don't you understand that it will be better for both of us to be free? That we—that I shall be happier without her? Are you the most unselfish woman that God ever put the breath of life into? Yes, you must be. My dear, I cannot go and fetch her back,—I cannot. There are some things you cannot ask a man to do; that is one of them. She asks me to release her. It's the only thing I can do now to serve her."

"Poor Philip! Poor, poor Philip!" I cried.

He pressed both my hands, and, bending from his great height, just touched the edge of my cheek with his lips. The next moment he was gone.

Well, I had nothing to do but to wait. It was not very long. We were unknown; we hadn't many friends. Those who heard the truth about Connie condoled with me, said it was a pity, that they hoped Lord Schovel would marry her, but, of course, everybody who knew them could see that she and Philip had made a mistake in marrying.

Aunt Margaret was brusquely triumphant. "Quite what I expected. She's paid that young gentleman out in his own coin. It served him pretty well right. I have been very angry with Connie, but I don't feel quite so angry with her now," she said bluntly.

"Aunt Margaret, how can you say such things?"

"Well, dear, other people think them. I say 'em; that's all. It does serve Stonor right, very well right. Of course, he's going to divorce her. He wouldn't be mean enough to keep her from marrying the other man. What would he gain? How foolish you must be, you silly little girl, to beg and pray of him to keep fetters on her when the bird has flown! Ridiculous! Of course he'll divorce her."

The hardest part of my task was to tell the girls what had happened.

"Why don't you go and see Connie?" one or the other of them would say. "Why can't we go? We met Philip this morning, with a face as long as a fiddle. He said Connie was away. Where is Connie? Where has she gone? What is she doing?"

"Well, dears, you'll have to know sooner or later, and I may as well tell you now. Connie has left Philip."

"Left him? But why?"

"Well, I hardly know. They didn't get on together as they thought they would when they married."

"Philip ought to have married you," cried Mona, with the outspoken wisdom of eleven years. "He reminds me of the little dog in

Æsop's 'Fables'—the one that had a piece of meat and saw another dog with a bit of meat in the stream. He thought he would swap, and he lost both. It seems to me that that's what Philip has done."

Her innocent yet wise words cut me to the very heart.

"Well—perhaps. But don't talk about it; don't talk about it outside to anyone. Your best way is to know little or nothing. Connie is staying in Paris, that's all you know. Will you remember?"

"Oh, yes, Joan dear, we'll remember. When anyone asks us who Lord Schovel is, we'll tell them we don't know, we've never heard of him."

I had not mentioned Lord Schovel's name. Of course, they had picked it all up at their school. However, it was best that they should know, because in the end the knowledge would surely come to them.

So we went on through the bright summer, through the hot month of August, which we spent at a little place on the east coast, and into September, when my sister's case came on.

It was soon over. There was no defence. A tiny paragraph in the papers was all that told an uninterested world that the wife of a black-and-white artist had left him for a noble earl. There are many such stories at that time of year. Nobody is particularly interested in them.

I saw nothing of Philip until after Christmas. He sent presents to the girls at the festive season and a sketch to me, but he didn't come to join our little domestic feast, as I had invited him to do. Then I met him once in the street. He was kind, a little distant, evidently unwilling to do more than pass the time of day. I left him, feeling hurt and sore. After all, if Connie had treated him badly, it was no fault of mine. But, there, men are all the same, the same all the world over. I suppose, now that all was finished and settled excepting the last legalizing of the decree which would part them forever, he regretted what he had done. I think that I felt his distant manner more bitterly than I had felt being forsaken.

Then, just at the beginning of April, he came one evening to see me. I was alone, the girls having gone to a little party at the house of one of their friends. I heard a sharp knock upon the door, heard Hanna come up the stairs and open it. The next moment Philip, unannounced, walked into the room.

"Joan," he said, putting out his hand to me, "I've got something to show you. Look at this."

He held out an evening paper, pointing to a paragraph at the foot of a column.

"The Earl of Schovel was this morning married very quietly at St. Margaret's, Westminster, to Miss Constance Standing. Only one or two intimate friends were present at the ceremony, after which the bride and groom left immediately for the Italian lakes."

"So you see," he said, "I am absolutely free. Joan, I have dared to think these last few months that I might in time make good the past."

"What are you thinking of?" I cried.

"I am thinking that I once made a great mistake. I come to you, humbly and penitently, to try if I may not repair it."

"But it is impossible."

"No, it is not impossible. By the curious law of this strange country, if I had lost my wife by death, there would have been an everlasting barrier between us. I have lost her in another way, but that way leaves me perfectly free to ask you to forget the past, to share the future with me."

"You are sure?"

"I am quite sure. There is no doubt about it. The only doubt that exists in my mind is that you have seen me when I was unhappy and soured. Joan, has the old love quite gone? Is the past quite dead? Can you forget and forgive? Will you come to me? Have you not a little love left?"

I tried to think; I tried to realize the situation. I had honestly done my best both to keep my sister in, and to win her back to, the home where she should have stayed to the end of her life. I had failed, but I felt the fault was not mine. I had given up everything for the happiness of others, and now, unexpectedly, quite unexpectedly, there unfolded before me a chance of the only real happiness that I could ever know.

"Philip," I said, "if you want me——"

"Oh Joan!"

"I have never felt any differently towards you."



## EPITAPH

BY CLARENCE URMV

LIFE called to me—a changeful call  
Of joy, of strife, of woe,  
Each day I pondered, "Shall I make  
My answer 'Yes' or 'No'?"

Death called to me—a wondrous call,  
So sweet, so calm, so clear!  
I did not wait to question it,  
But quickly answered, "Here!"

# LINCOLN'S OFFICIAL HABIT

*By Leslie J. Perry*

*Late of War Records Board of Publication, Washington, D. C.*

**S**URPRISE is often expressed by very intelligent people that so large a proportion of President Lincoln's most important telegrams, and some of his letters, are dated from the War Department instead of the Executive Mansion, and none of them from the Navy, Treasury, or other administrative bureaus. This is generally deemed a very singular fact, and from it writers have plausibly drawn the conclusion that Lincoln personally liked the Secretary of War better than any of the other Cabinet officers. While this indeed appears to have been true, it does not necessarily so follow. He certainly held Mr. Seward in high regard, yet he seldom went to the State Department.

In the circumstances it was not at all singular. The explanation is easy. War was the business of that time, and Lincoln's eyes were always bent to the army, especially when great military events were impending. He habitually haunted the adjacent War Department and Army Head-Quarters, where abode General Halleck, his military adviser, for news and views. Head and heart were strenuously concentrated on the fight, wherever it might be. His fertile brain saw too the critical points in the game oftentimes far more clearly than some of his so-called "ablest generals." He not only wished to know what was going on in the field, but performed his own part nobly. In the heat of action, or at crucial moments, his orders, suggestions, and inquiries were fired off spontaneously from wherever he might be at the moment, and at such periods he was generally "over at the War Department," with Mr. Stanton. That is the chief reason why so many of his despatches are dated at that department, and not because he perhaps held Stanton in higher esteem than the Secretary of the Navy, or State, or Treasury.

Lincoln's mental processes in times of victory and defeat, indeed at all times, are clearly delineated in this daily telegraphic correspondence with his generals in the field. To General Rosecrans, the day after his disaster at Chickamauga, he telegraphed from the War Department: "Be of good cheer. We have unabated confidence in you and in your soldiers and officers." And, probably at the same hour, this to another General in supporting distance of Rosecrans:



"WAR DEPARTMENT, September 21, 1863.

"GENERAL BURNSIDE, Greenville, Tenn.:

"If you are to do any good to Rosecrans it will not do to waste time with Jonesborough. It is clearly too late to do the most good that might be done, but I hope it will still do some good. Please do not lose a moment.

"A. LINCOLN."

McClellan, apparently cowed by the exaggerated numbers of the enemy menacing him, in the midst of the Seven Days' battles complainingly telegraphed a most gloomy outlook. Lincoln answered:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, June 28, 1862.

"MAJOR-GENERAL MCCLELLAN:

"Save your army at all events. Will send re-enforcements as fast as we can. Of course they cannot reach you to-day, to-morrow, or next day. I have not said you were ungenerous for saying you needed re-enforcements. I thought you were ungenerous in assuming that I did not send them as fast as I could. I feel any misfortune to you and to your army quite as keenly as you feel it yourself. . . .

"A. LINCOLN."

Here is a little note of encouragement, written purposely to be transmitted by Halleck to Meade, then in pursuit of Lee, who had been defeated at Gettysburg:

WAR DEPARTMENT, July 7, 1863.

"MAJOR-GENERAL HALLECK:

"We have certain information that Vicksburg surrendered to General Grant on the 4th of July. Now, if General Meade can complete his work, so gloriously prosecuted thus far, by the literal or substantial destruction of Lee's army, the rebellion will be over.

"Yours truly,

"A. LINCOLN."

And this to Grant crossing the James:

"Have read your despatch of 1:30 P.M. yesterday (June 14, 1864). I begin to see it! You will succeed. God bless you all."

There are many others of a similar tenor, but the foregoing are sufficient to show that Lincoln's faculties, whatever the circumstances, never lacked in vigor or the element of precision. He never became unduly elated, nor was he ever completely unhinged by disaster. Nevertheless he was always in great travail when the Union armies were hard pressed. This is discernible in some of his despatches during the Second Bull Run campaign, while Washington was cut off from Pope's army, as follows:

## Lincoln's Official Habit

"WASHINGTON, August 27, 1862.

"MAJOR-GENERAL McCLELLAN, Alexandria:

"What news from the front?

"A. LINCOLN."

And on the same day to General Burnside at Falmouth: "Do you hear anything from Pope?" Again on the 28th: "Any news from Pope?" And on the 29th: "Any further news? Does Devin mean that sound of firing heard in direction of Warrenton as stated, or in direction of Warrenton Junction?" The following shows how carefully he analyzed and weighed information:

"WASHINGTON, August 28, 1862.

"COLONEL HAUPT, Alexandria:

"Yours received. How do you learn that the rebel forces at Manassas are large, and commanded by several of their best generals?

"A. LINCOLN."

Again on the 30th to Colonel Haupt at Alexandria: "What news?" and a second despatch the same day: "Please send me the latest news." He also telegraphed General Banks, supposed to be at Manassas Junction: "Please tell me what news." Nor was this the only campaign in which Lincoln manifested a burning interest. It was so always—during Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. He took no less interest in Western campaigns, though that theatre was so remote that communications were uncertain and slower and hence more meagre. Sometimes great battles were pulled off out there before even the preliminary strategic movements were heard of in Washington. Notwithstanding his multifarious executive duties, that his mind was seldom off the military field, where it was constantly occupied with a great variety of subjects, is proved by the following:

"WASHINGTON, November 18, 1862.

"MAJOR-GENERAL DIX, Fort Monroe:

"Please give me your best opinion as to the number of the enemy now at Richmond, and also at Petersburg.

"A. LINCOLN."

While Grant was moving against Vicksburg he sent the following to General Rosecrans, the substance of which was repeated in different forms several times during the course of two months by the Secretary of War and General Halleck:

"WASHINGTON, May 28, 1863.

"MAJOR-GENERAL ROSECRANS, Murfreesborough, Tenn.:

"I would not push you to rashness, but I am very anxious that you do your utmost, short of rashness, to keep Bragg from getting off to help Johnston against Grant.

"A. LINCOLN."

The department commander at Baltimore permitted the enemy to creep up on his forces in the Shenandoah Valley. Lincoln thus warned him:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, June 14, 1863.

"MAJOR-GENERAL SCHENCK, Baltimore:

"Get General Milroy from Winchester to Harper's Ferry, if possible. He will be 'gobbled up' if he remains, if he is not already past redemption.

"A. LINCOLN."

Milroy then was "already past redemption," and was "gobbled up" the very next day by the Rebel General Ewell on the road to Pennsylvania. The case of Milroy, who was now in disgrace, illustrates another of the President's characteristics. The Indiana delegation in Congress waited on him subsequently, expressing a strong feeling in favor of Milroy's restoration to command. Lincoln knew Milroy personally, and had a high regard for him. Telegraphing to General Grant, then in Tennessee, explaining the Indiana pressure, Lincoln said:

"I share in this feeling. He (Milroy) is not a difficult man to satisfy, sincerity and courage being his strong points. Believing in our cause and wanting to fight for it is the whole matter with him. Could you, without embarrassment, assign him a place if directed to report to you?

"A. LINCOLN."

That was a manly thing to say of a commonplace but patriotic General, laboring under the cloud of defeat, the more so as it was said to the most victorious General in the service, who had but little patience with poor officers. Milroy got another command.

On the same day that Lincoln sent the despatch to Schenck about Milroy, he sent this to another officer having trouble with Ewell in the Valley:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, June 14, 1863.

"GENERAL TYLER, Martinsburg:

"If you are besieged, how do you dispatch me? Why did you not leave before being besieged?

"A. LINCOLN."

Sometimes, in dealing with the most serious matters, he brought into play a semi-facetious, sardonic humor which was very effective for his purpose. Governor Andrew Johnson telegraphed as an interesting item of one of the Tennessee fights that the Confederate ex-Congressman "Joe Heiskell walked to meet" his Union captors. Lincoln replied:

## Lincoln's Official Habit

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, August 26, 1864.

"GOVERNOR ANDREW JOHNSON, Nashville:

"Thanks to General Gillem for making the news, and also to you for sending it. Does Joe Heiskell's 'walking to meet us' mean any more than that Joe was scared and wanted to save his skin?

"A. LINCOLN."

Shortly after the capture of Atlanta, General Sherman telegraphed Halleck that "Governor Brown has disbanded his [Georgia] militia to gather the corn and sorghum of the State. I have reason to believe that he and Stephens want to visit me." Whereupon the following is found:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, September 17, 1864.

"MAJOR-GENERAL SHERMAN:

"I feel great interest in the subject of your despatch mentioning corn and sorghum, and contemplated visit to you.

"A. LINCOLN."

The expected visit of the two distinguished Georgia Confederates never took place, however.

In August, 1862, the Sioux Indians of Minnesota went upon the war-path and speedily massacred some six hundred or eight hundred people, causing a great panic. The first draft for Union troops was soon to take place, which contributed to the popular gloom. Governor Ramsey sent a scare telegram to Lincoln, urging that the draft be deferred for this reason and because it was "absolutely impossible for it to proceed." The President answered as follows:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, August 27, 1862.

"GOVERNOR RAMSEY, St. Paul, Minn.:

"Yours received. Attend to the Indians. If the draft cannot proceed, of course it will not proceed. Necessity knows no law. The Government cannot extend the time.

"A. LINCOLN."

The draft was consummated without difficulty. The Indians too were subdued, and a military commission condemned three hundred and three of the prisoners to be hanged. There was a bloodthirsty desire in Minnesota to have the sentence carried into execution without a jot's abatement. But Lincoln procured and studied the record of the court, and all but thirty-eight of the more wicked redskins were eventually reprieved. His final order of execution was couched in these terms:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, December 16, 1862.

"BRIGADIER-GENERAL H. H. SIBLEY, St. Paul, Minn.:

"As you suggest, let the execution fixed for Friday, the 19th inst., be postponed to, and be done on, Friday, the 26th inst.

"A. LINCOLN."

"OPERATOR: Please send this very carefully and accurately."

He could sometimes be very peremptory, for with all his humanitarianism the President was a man of resolution. Here is a case in point:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, August 12, 1862.

"GOVERNOR ANDREW, Boston, Mass.:

"Your despatch saying 'I can't get those regiments off because I can't get quick work out of the United States disbursing officer and paymaster' is received. Please say to those gentlemen that if they do not work quickly I will make quick work with them! In the name of all that is reasonable, how long does it take to pay a couple of regiments? We were never more in need of the arrival of regiments than now, even to-day.

"A. LINCOLN."

During the Kentucky panic caused by Bragg's invasion in 1862, under date of September 12, Lincoln telegraphed General Boyle, who had been sending in scare news from Louisville: "Where is the enemy which you dread at Louisville? With all possible respect for you, I must think General Wright's military opinion the better." This was pretty strong language to a man of Boyle's local consequence, and shows that Lincoln was the master all the time, and of everybody. September 21, 1863, he telegraphed Burnside this order: "Go to Rosecrans with your force without a moment's delay."

During the Gettysburg campaign the Adjutant-General of the Army was in Pennsylvania expediting the concentration of new troops. Here is an extraordinary telegram to that officer:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, July 8, 1863.

"GENERAL LORENZO THOMAS, Harrisburg, Pa.:

"Your despatch of this morning to the Secretary of War is before me. The forces you speak of will be of no imaginable service if they cannot go forward with a little more expedition. Lee is now passing the Potomac faster than the forces you mention are passing Carlisle. Forces now beyond Carlisle to be joined by regiments still at Harrisburg, and the united force again to join Pierce somewhere, and the whole to move down the Cumberland Valley, will, in my unprofessional opinion, be quite as likely to capture the 'man in the moon' as any part of Lee's army.

"A. LINCOLN."

To an officer who was oppressing negroes he sent this warning:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, February 7, 1865.

"LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GLENN, Henderson, Ky.:

"Complaint is made to me that you are forcing negroes into the military service, and even torturing them—riding them on rails, and the like—to extort their consent. I hope this may be a mistake. The like must not be done by you or any one under you. You must not force negroes any more than white men. Answer me on this.

"A. LINCOLN."

## Lincoln's Official Habit

No answer from Colonel Glenn is found. Here is another telegram which will surprise people who imagine Lincoln was an easy-going soul who let events take care of themselves:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, May 27, 1862.

"MAJOR-GENERAL FREMONT:

"I see that you are at Moorefield. You were expressly ordered to march to Harrisonburg. What does this mean?

"A. LINCOLN."

All the foregoing tell the story of a strong, courageous personality, tempered by sound judgment and moderation. That he remained cool and perfect master of all his faculties in face of threatened danger, while others around him were frantic with alarm, is shown by the following answer to the stampeded citizens of Baltimore when Early defeated the Union army at the Monocacy:

"WASHINGTON, July 10, 1864.

"THOMAS SWANN AND OTHERS, Baltimore:

"Yours of last night received. I have not a single soldier but who is being disposed by the military for the best protection of all. By latest accounts the enemy is moving on Washington. They cannot fly to either place. Let us be vigilant, but keep cool. I hope neither Baltimore nor Washington will be taken.

"A. LINCOLN."

In dealing with prisoners of war and state Lincoln had a wise method of making Union people of character on the ground responsible in some sort for the good conduct of their fellow-citizens who had fallen into custody. Cases in point, showing new \* features, may be mentioned. Pressure being brought to bear in behalf of ex-Governor Morehead, of Kentucky, a prisoner in Fort Lafayette, Lincoln penned the following singular note to Secretary Seward, who had charge of such matters:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, October 4, 1861.

"HON. SECRETARY OF STATE.

"MY DEAR SIR: Please see Mr. Walker, well-vouched as a Union man and son-in-law of Governor Morehead, and pleading

\* About a dozen years ago it was discovered that some of the most characteristic and unique of Lincoln's utterances were in the form of sententious indorsements, made in his own handwriting, on papers submitted in connection with various military prisoners, the official files of which were being systematically searched for the War Records. That was the duty of the writer of this paper, and in the War Department archives he found many new and interesting things, though most of them of no historical importance except as a study of Lincoln's character. These from time to time he made available to biographers and others through the magazines and newspapers, in articles on Lincoln's clemency, his home life in Washington, etc., containing fac-similes of Lincoln telegrams never before published.—EDITOR.



for his release. I understand the Kentucky arrests were not made by special direction from here, and I am willing, if you are, that any of the parties may be released when James Guthrie and James Speed think they should be.

"Yours truly,

"A. LINCOLN."

Now, Lincoln never shunned responsibility, yet it will be noted that in this case he threw it upon Seward, contingent upon the decision of two of Morehead's fellow-citizens, presumptively acquainted with the merits of the case. That this was not a mere careless waiving off of an inconsequential matter is proved by the following indorsement made about the same date on the prayer of Lincoln's personal friend, George D. Prentice, of the *Louisville Journal*, for the release of Morehead and others:

"Were sent to Fort Lafayette by the military authorities of Kentucky, and it would be improper for me to intervene without further knowledge of the facts than I now possess.

"A. LINCOLN."

The same policy of shifting responsibility, or rather placing it upon others having better information than himself, is shown in this less important case:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, March 25, 1863.

"MR. BENJAMIN GRATZ, Lexington, Ky.:

"Show this to whom it may concern as your authority for allowing Mrs. Shelby to remain at your house so long as you choose to be responsible for what she does.

"A. LINCOLN."

The two following show how easy and generous he was in dealing with Confederate prisoners and sympathizers:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, February 4, 1865.

"OFFICER IN COMMAND AT JOHNSON'S ISLAND, Ohio:

"Parole Lieutenant John A. Stephens, prisoner of war, to report to me in person, and send him to me. It is in pursuance of an arrangement I made yesterday with his uncle, Hon. A. H. Stephens. Acknowledge receipt.

"A. LINCOLN."

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, March 23, 1865.

"GENERAL DODGE, Commanding, St. Louis:

"Allow Mrs. R. S. Ewell the benefit of my amnesty proclamation on her taking the oath.

"A. LINCOLN."

Mrs. Ewell was the wife of the Confederate Lieutenant-General, and Lieutenant Stephens was the nephew of the Vice-President of the Confederacy. Lincoln and Stephens had met at the Hampton Roads peace conference for the first time since they had served together in the Thirtieth Congress, fifteen years before.

But when necessary to shield his subordinates from hurtful criticism Lincoln did not hesitate to assume responsibility, even when he was not necessitated to do so. His great moral courage is disclosed in the following concerning another and far more important prisoner than Morehead:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, May 1, 1862.

"TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES:

"In answer to the resolution of the Senate in relation to Brigadier-General Stone I have the honor to state that he was arrested and imprisoned under my general authority and upon evidence which, whether he be guilty or innocent, required, as appears to me, such proceedings to be had against him for the public safety.

"I deem it incompatible with the public interest, as also perhaps unjust to General Stone, to make a more particular statement of the evidence. He has not been tried because in the state of military operations at the time of his arrest and since the officers to constitute a court-martial and for witnesses could not be withdrawn from duty without serious injury to the service. He will be allowed a trial without any unnecessary delay; the charges and specifications will be furnished him in due season, and every facility for his defense will be afforded him by the War Department.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN."

As a matter of fact, Stone's arrest on February 9, 1862, as an alleged traitor, was ordered by the furious Secretary of War on misleading representations designed to make General Stone the scapegoat for the Ball's Bluff disaster. It is possible that Lincoln was aware of Stanton's intention and acquiesced in it, but there is no evidence of such a fact. It was hardly necessary, therefore, for Lincoln thus to assume responsibility for the unwarranted blunder. It was, however, wholly characteristic of the President to do this, and all the more significant in this case because the country was rapidly becoming aware of the fact that General Stone had been made the victim of a hasty and unjustifiable outrage. It may be stated here that he was never tried, that no charges or specifications were ever filed against him, and that several months afterwards he was quietly released, and subsequently restored to duty on General Banks's staff.

Lincoln had no illusions about peace at any time after the first great battle. Governor Curtin received the following answer to a despatch saying that the people of Harrisburg were greatly excited over a rumor that three Southern States had offered to return to their allegiance:

"WASHINGTON, November 25, 1864.

"GOVERNOR CURTIN, Harrisburg, Pa.:

"I have no knowledge, information, or belief that three States, or any State, offer to resume allegiance.

"A. LINCOLN."

To a strong petition for the promotion of his friend, General John Pope, into the regular army, he replied:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, April 10, 1862.

"HON. RICHARD YATES and HON. WILLIAM BUTLER, Springfield, Ill.:

"I fully appreciate General Pope's splendid achievements with their invaluable results; but you must know that major-generalships in the regular army are not as plenty as blackberries.

"A. LINCOLN."

Amid these more serious affairs of war, this great man was at the same time just as busily immersed in the muck and mire of every-day administration as any President in peace times. Some of his daily harassments are indicated by the following:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, July 29, 1861.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE KENTUCKY DELEGATION WHO ARE FOR THE UNION:

"I somewhat wish to authorize my friend, Jesse Bayles, to raise a Kentucky regiment, but I do not wish to do it without your consent. If you consent, please write so at the bottom of this.

"A. LINCOLN."

Indorsed on the paper, just below, are the words, "We consent," signed by five Kentucky members who were "for the Union." In due course Jesse Bayles became colonel of the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry.

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, August 18, 1862.

"S. B. MOODY, Springfield, Ill.:

"Which do you prefer, commissary or quartermaster? If appointed, it must be without conditions.

"A. LINCOLN."

"SPRINGFIELD, ILL., September 23, 1863.

"HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT A. LINCOLN:

"I have just learned that Judge Archy Williams is dead, and I desire to ask the favor that you will not appoint his successor till I can see you, about third day of October.

"RICHARD YATES."

"NEW YORK CITY, May 9, 1864.

"A. LINCOLN, President U. S.:

"J. S. Legate, of Kansas, has resigned. Senator Lane agreed with me to recommend the appointment of E. Cheesborough for that office [U. S. Assessor]. I am anxious for appointment of Cheesborough.

"S. C. POMEROY, U. S. S."

In the public archives there is a barrel of such despatches as the two foregoing. Some of them were answered, but doubtless hundreds passed unnoticed, as they deserved to.

## Lincoln's Official Habit

"DENVER, October 12, 1863.

"A. LINCOLN, President:

"Please delay any opinion as to Governor Evans until you hear from me.

"JOHN G. NICOLAY."

Colonel Nicolay was the President's private secretary, and both he and Major Hay, the assistant, who is now Secretary of State, made many journeys in all directions in Lincoln's service. Doubtless Colonel Nicolay was in Denver on one of these important missions when the foregoing was sent. To reach Denver then, in addition to a thousand miles of rail journey, Nicolay had to travel six hundred miles in an overland stage through a hostile Indian country.

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, September 23, 1864.

"GOVERNOR WILLIAM DENNISON, Columbus, O.:

"Mr. Blair has resigned, and I appoint you Postmaster-General. Come on immediately.

"A. LINCOLN."

A somewhat abrupt announcement of a Cabinet appointment, but doubtless the appointment had been prearranged. Here is something after the same style to his old law partner in Springfield:

"WASHINGTON, February 19, 1863.

"WILLIAM H. HERNDON, Springfield, Ill.:

"Would you accept a job of about a month's duration at St. Louis, five dollars a day and mileage? Answer.

"A. LINCOLN."

Farce and tragedy followed each other swiftly in the theatre of the executive office in those times, as witness the following:

"PHILADELPHIA, September 19, 1863.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

"Is John Gallagher to be shot? Answer, please.

"HUGHEY GALLAGHER."

"WAR DEPARTMENT, September 19, 1863.

"HUGHEY GALLAGHER, Philadelphia:

"I know nothing as to John Gallagher. The law does not require this class of cases to come before me, and they do not come unless brought by the friends of the condemned.

"A. LINCOLN."

Such despatches Lincoln always answered in his own hand, and in the clearest possible language. Usually he paid no attention to miscellaneous queries like the following, which was doubtless referred to the proper department for answer:

"BATH, ME., September 23, 1863.

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

"Can Mr. Gove export his horse for his private use to Nassau? Mr. G. is a loyal citizen of Bath.

"R. FISHER, Collector."

The President set aside General Curtis's order suspending a St. Louis preacher, and ordering him and his family out of the city, January 2, 1863, and thus admonished that General in closing:

"The United States Government must not, as by this order, undertake to run the churches. When an individual in the church, or out of it, becomes dangerous to the public interests he must be checked, but let the churches, as such, take care of themselves. It will not do for the United States to appoint trustees, supervisors, or other agents for the churches.

"Yours truly,

"A. LINCOLN."

This was a laconic manner he had of calling politicians and statesmen to a conference, generally on concerns of their own:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, August 15, 1862.

"HON. JAMES DIXON, Hartford, Conn.:

"Come here.

"A. LINCOLN."

Dixon was a United States Senator. They were sometimes just as abrupt towards him, as witness the following:

"SPARTA, WIS., October 9, 1863.

"PRESIDENT UNITED STATES:

"Why begin our draft on Sunday, just before election?

"J. R. DOOLITTLE."

It may be guessed that Lincoln was the telegraphic and epistolary mark of every sort of crank who had an ax to grind. There was another kind who showered him with suggestions, admonitions, and advice of every conceivable nature, good, bad, and indifferent, like these:

"PHILADELPHIA, July 15, 1863.

"HIS EXCELLENCY ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

"Albert Gallatin Thorp informed me that Seymour is well controlled beyond safe limits. Why hesitate?

"ROBERT A. MAXWELL."

To which Lincoln respectfully replied: "Your despatch of to-day received, but I do not understand it." Almost precisely the same answer, dated November 17, 1862, is returned to a prior despatch of this Maxwell's, who appears to have been a self-appointed mentor of the Administration. September 23, 1863, he sent this to Lincoln:

"Will Buell's testamentary executor, General Thomas, ever let Rosecrans succeed?" To this query no answer is found. It is not at all surprising that the badgered President did not "understand" such inconsiderate ebullitions.

Sometimes his extreme caution in dealing with public opinion had the appearance of timidity. Governor Morton, of Indiana, suggested that the President meet him at Harrisburg on important business, being too busy to waste only four additional hours to come on to Washington. Was it likely the President would be less busy? He answered:

"WASHINGTON, February 1, 1863.

"GOVERNOR O. P. MORTON, Indianapolis, Ind.:

"I think it would not do for me to meet you at Harrisburg. It would be known and misconstrued a thousand ways. Of course, if the whole truth could be told and accepted as truth it would do no harm, but that is impossible.

"A. LINCOLN."

In the spring of 1864, to some suggestion from Governor Dennison, of Ohio, Colonel Nicolay replied for his chief: "The President thinks he cannot safely write that class of letters." Here is another specimen of his circumspection, although it is not known what the "offer" of Mr. Williams was:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, April 25, 1864.

"JOHN WILLIAMS, Springfield, Ill.:

"Yours of the 15th is just received. Thanks for your kind remembrance. I would accept your offer at once, were it not that I fear there would be some impropriety in it, though I do not see that there would. I will think of it for awhile.

"A. LINCOLN."

Thus it will be seen that this well-balanced man could be bold, cautious, stern, generous, wise, or whimsical as at the moment seemed most expedient. But he seemed to be utterly devoid of one overmastering human passion—hatred found no place in his heart. We are told by Mr. Dana that Lincoln was a "supreme politician," a view fully confirmed by his intimate Illinois associates. And from all accounts he was an unusually crafty one, very artful in forwarding his own interests, and, it is said, oftentimes somewhat truculent in his self-assertion. This may be so. In October, 1864, one John Lellyett presented a long petition of some citizens of Tennessee protesting against Governor Johnson's proclamation ordering an election in the State for President that fall. This was supposed to be a trick in favor of McClellan's candidacy for the Presidency. Mr. Lincoln sneeringly asked:

"May I inquire how long it took you and the New York politicians to concoct that paper?"

Then more emphatically: "I will answer that I expect to let the friends of George B. McClellan manage their side of this contest in their own way, and I will manage my side in my own way. I know



you intend to make a point of this. But go ahead. You have my answer."

As the time drew near for the second inauguration, Governor Johnson informed him that it might be impossible for him to come on because of the necessity for his continued presence at Nashville. Lincoln telegraphed the Vice-President elect:

"WASHINGTON, January 24, 1865.

"HON. ANDREW JOHNSON, Nashville, Tenn.:

"Several members of the Cabinet, with myself, considered the question to-day as to the time of your coming on here. While we fully appreciate your wishes to remain in Tennessee until her State government shall be completely reinaugurated, it is our unanimous conclusion that it is unsafe for you not to be here on the 4th of March. Be sure to reach here by that time.

"A. LINCOLN."

Little did he then imagine how soon Johnson was to become indeed an important factor beyond the comparatively small concerns of Tennessee.

After the recapture of Fort Sumter Secretary Stanton fixed up an order governing the formal ceremonies of again hoisting the national flag over it, and sent it to Lincoln at City Point. He answered:

"CITY POINT, VA., March 27, 1865.

"HON. SECRETARY OF WAR:

"Yours inclosing Fort Sumter order received. I think of but one suggestion. I feel quite confident that Sumter fell on the 13th and not on the 14th of April, as you have it. It fell on Saturday, the 13th. The first call for troops on our part was got out on Sunday, the 14th, and given date and issued on Monday, the 15th. Look up the old almanac and other data, and see if I am not right.

"A. LINCOLN."

It turned out that both were right. Stanton telegraphed in reply that although the surrender was agreed upon on the 13th, Major Anderson "marched out of the fort on Sunday afternoon, the 14th, with colors flying and drums beating." This is very interesting as showing the care with which Lincoln always guarded against mistakes and misunderstandings. He was attentively careful of the meaning of words, as well as the collective meaning or impression their combination conveyed. That is one valuable lesson taught by all his letters and telegrams. Another is that whatever he had in hand was made the important matter of the moment, and was always thoroughly done.

There remains in some quarters an impression that in his personal manner and address Lincoln was too brusquely, sometimes even offensively, familiar with his daily associates, but certainly no person could appear less so throughout all his correspondence and official utterances.

Even in informal and purely personal matters his numerous notes and telegrams to his closest friends were always most respectful and dignified, if anything too stiffly formal. Periodically a story goes the rounds of the public press in which the President addresses his Secretary of War as "Dear Stanton," directing him to appoint a certain man chaplain in the army. In due course Stanton replies: "Dear Mr. Lincoln: He is not a preacher." There is further correspondence between "Dear Stanton" and "Dear Mr. Lincoln" on the subject, finally culminating in Stanton refusing point blank to appoint the President's friend to the chaplaincy. This is to show how yielding Lincoln was, and at the same time Stanton's masterful position in the Cabinet.

Now, there is internal evidence that nothing of this kind ever happened. In the first place, the President and not his Secretary of War appointed all the chaplains in the regular army; secondly, Mr. Stanton was never addressed by the President as "Dear Stanton" on any occasion whatever. Lincoln's foregoing correspondence is proof positive of this. It also pretty plainly indicates that if Lincoln had a friend he desired to appoint to an office he would have done it very quickly despite Mr. Stanton's opposition.

In fact, Lincoln never started even the most hasty note "Dear Seward," or "Dear Stanton," or "Dear Halleck," as under the circumstances at times might have been clearly permissible. They were almost invariably addressed "Hon. Secretary of State, My Dear Sir," or, "Hon. Secretary of War," or "Major-General Halleck," or if the name was used it was "Hon. William H. Seward," or "Hon. Edwin M. Stanton," as the case might be, exactly as they are quoted in this article, which are typical of his whole correspondence.

Lincoln was too serious a man himself to imagine that he could with impunity underrate the dignity of others.



## IN WINTER

BY FRANCIS STERNE PALMER

ONE bird could not make May here,  
One rose could not make June;—  
Yet frost and snow give way here:  
It seems a Summer noon.

Higher than bird or rose here  
Is one sweet woman's art;—  
How fair the drear world grows here  
For the man who wins her heart!

BLIND CHILDREN

BY I. ZANGWILL

LAUGHING, the blind boys  
Run round their college-lawn,  
Playing such games of buff  
Over its dappled grass.

See the blind frolicsome  
Girls in blue pinafores,  
Turning their skipping-ropes.

How full and rich a world  
Theirs to inhabit is,  
Sweet scent of grass and bloom,  
Playmates' glad symphony,  
Cool touch of western wind,  
Sunshine's divine caress.

How should they know or feel  
They are in darkness?

But—O the miracle!  
If a Redeemer came,  
Laid finger on their eyes—  
One touch and what a world,  
New-born in loveliness!

Spaces of green and sky,  
Hulls of white cloud adrift,  
Ivy-grown college-walls,  
Shining loved faces.

What a dark world—who knows?—  
Ours to inhabit is!  
One touch, and what a strange  
Glory might burst on us,  
What a hid universe!

Do we sport carelessly,  
Blindly upon the verge  
Of an Apocalypse?

# THE ABRACADABRA AFFAIR

*By Percie W. Hart*

*Author of "The Ludovic Zam Affair," etc.*

MY old chum, Phidias Rowell Smythe, was armchaired at one side of the open fireplace, while I occupied a similarly comfortable position on the other. My visit to New York was drawing to a close, and although the dear fellow had fulfilled the complex duties of a host in no uncertain manner, I was not completely satisfied. One of the main reasons that had lured me away from wife and babies was to personally tell him how glad I felt at the way he was getting along in the world. Even in our country village we had heard many rumors of his social prominence, and for a penniless lad to attain to such a position in New York City meant a good deal, we knew. But Phidias, while lavish of purse and time in making every moment of my stay as enjoyable as possible, had been strangely reticent about his personal affairs so far, and I felt certain that unless I questioned him point-blank I should go away as wise concerning the matter as I had come. For the sake of my own reputation with the home people, this state of ignorance would never do; so, making up my mind that there could be no better time than the present, I began the attack.

"You seem to be pretty well fixed financially," I commenced, and then made a convenient interval for his expected answer by pausing to light a fresh cigar.

"I have my profession," he replied, with an odd sort of smile. "It yields me a fair income, and, in my own estimation at least, the future prospects are very bright."

"Profession?" I gasped.

"I have a little gem of an office on the top floor of one of the tall down-town buildings," my chum went on composedly. "I'll take you there before you go back home."

"But, my dear fellow," I cried, "I never knew that you had qualified for any one of the—what are called professions?"

"Meaning 'the army, the navy, the church, or the stage'?" Smythe hummed gayly.

"And—er—music and art and——" I began rather lamely.

"No need to catalogue them," he interposed, "for you would not

find it in that way. I went over the list myself at one time, but failing to discover anything suitable, I invented a profession."

"But—Phidias—er—what do you—er—do?" I asked, as he came to an abrupt pause.

"Worm my way into other people's business," he remarked innocently.

I threw a half-smoked cigar into the fireplace, and rose to my feet with all the frigid courtesy of which I was capable.

"After such a personal reflection upon my well-intentioned——" I began indignantly.

"Hey! What!" bawled my old chum in evident amazement, and then burst into a hearty fit of laughter. "Ha-ha! Ha-ha! You'll excuse me, Horace, but—ha-ha! I can't really help it. Sit down again, old man. You're too sensitive by half. I'm honestly telling you about my own profession, or means of money-getting. I call myself an investigator. Of course, this confidence is to be strictly between ourselves, or I might find my specialty invaded by a horde of ambitious men and women, who would likely bring the whole thing into disrepute. Sit down and take another cigar. I'll tell you all about it, Horace."

I complied, though with rather an ill grace, for I was still suspicious of his complete sincerity.

"As I said before," he went on, "I invented the profession which I follow, and a paying one it has turned out to be too, on the whole. Of course, I frequently go to a lot of trouble and expense without tangible result, but every now and then I come upon something which turns in a handsome profit."

"I trust there is nothing dishonest about it," I put in.

"I have never yet done anything that I would be ashamed to have my mother know," Phidias gravely remarked.

"How do you begin—er—when you start to—er—worm your way into other people's business?" I asked, after a few minutes of silence between us.

"Take some little clue, the simpler the better, and follow it up to a logical finish," said my companion, at the same time rising from his chair and walking over to the side-table. "Very often I let chance decide this clue. What do you say to making a sample investigation with me? I don't know but what you will enjoy it as much as any other of your New York experiences."

Before I could find words in which to reply he went on:

"Choose any distance by inches under two feet?"

"Six inches," I hazarded.

"Good!" he cried. "Now take any number from one to nine."

"One," I said.

"That's a little out of the ordinary," Phidias remarked as he came forward with a foot-rule and a printed sheet in his hands. "The majority of people, in such a case, are apt to pick out an intermediate number—five or six, for instance. I don't exactly know why, but I could make a guess, I think, if I tried. But, look here, I have the first page of a newspaper in my hand?"

"Yes."

"I am going to apply your idle guesses to it for the purpose of finding a clue."

Visions of practical joking or possible insanity passed before my mind's eye, but I held my peace.

"Taking the number—one—chosen by you, I pick out the first column of print," went on Phidias, stooping to spread the news-sheet upon the floor at my feet, "and measuring down the distance you mentioned,—six inches,—I find—— Well, you ought to be interested, for the clue is rather more mysterious-looking than most that I am accustomed to deal with,—right in the centre of the 'agony' column."

"What is it?" I demanded.

"This advertisement," he said, quickly producing a little pair of scissors from his vest pocket, snipping round the slip, and handing the last-named to me.

Here is what I saw:

```

Y K B K T K B K T
O T M C K J T K
D Z I U X T K
X V O T K Y
Z X K K Z
G T J C
O R R
O G
S

```

I looked it over, smiled, and handed the slip back to him.

"If you can make anything out of that gibberish, I'll be glad to help you follow it up," I remarked triumphantly. Then I settled back in the easy-chair.

"All right," Phidias quickly replied, producing a pencil and beginning to make notes upon his cuff.

"You don't tell me that you expect to find out the meaning of that inverted pyramid of letters?" I asked, straightening up again.

"Nothing easier, my dear boy," he went on, still studying the slip. "These cryptographs that appear in the personal columns are usually of the simplest kind. I take it that the specimen before us is of the same variety, and is merely put into this abracadabra form as a means of further mystification. It is strange, after so much has been printed about solving these puny word-puzzles, that they still continue in



use. Hem! One, two, three, four,—one, two, three, four, five, six——”

“What are you doing?” I put in.

“Counting the letter which appears to be the most frequent,” Phidias replied. “I find it to be ‘k.’ There are no less than ten of him. If this abracadabra is solvable in the English language, this letter ‘k’ is likely to represent the letter ‘e,’ for the reason that that is the most frequently used letter in our tongue. Counting back in the alphabet from ‘k’ to ‘e’ gives us seven. Em—ah! Why, this is the very simplest form of a cryptograph. I am disappointed for your sake. I had hoped that it would turn out to be of a compound nature, requiring hours of——”

“What is the translation, and how can you read it?” I interrupted incredulously.

“Simply transpose each letter back seven places in the alphabet,” he went on disdainfully. “Here, I’ve written it out. Listen. This is the clue which we are to follow: ‘Seven evening Wed. next corner Pine Street and William.’”

“Wednesday next?” I cried, for I was getting excited.

“This paper is of last Friday’s date,” hurriedly interposed my chum, after glancing at the sheet upon the floor, “so their Wednesday next means to-day. It is now a quarter past six. We’ve just got time to make it. Get your coat, and—take things you think you may need with you. I never can tell when I start out on these chases whether I will get back home again in a minute or a month, so I try to go prepared for the unexpected.”

While he was thus speaking, Phidias dodged hither and thither about the room, filling his pockets with all manner of small articles, from a paper of pins to a telescopic drinking-cup, and at the same time producing my overcoat, hat, and gloves from the anteroom and throwing them into my arms. Almost unconsciously becoming imbued with a portion of his enthusiasm, I forthwith joined in the feverish bustle to the best of my abilities, and within a very few minutes we were out-doors in the chill autumn air.

A few steps to the nearest Elevated station, and then a short walk upon leaving the train at Cortlandt Street, brought us to the neighborhood of the advertised trysting-place within a few minutes before the appointed hour. Pine Street seemed doubly gloomy on entering it from the brilliantly lighted Broadway. The scattered lamps along the former narrow and building-shrouded thoroughfare merely formed islands of illumination in the surrounding sea of gloom. Several others besides ourselves were using the street at the time,—late-working clerks, janitors, and such, most likely. All this was helpful towards preventing our direct espionage being noticed.

As we walked steadily, but not too hastily, along the sidewalk, my companion, in low whispers, added some more details to the budget of instructions he had been giving me on our way down-town.

"We may safely infer that this appointment will be between two people or groups of people, most likely the former," he ran on. "If they keep together after meeting, all well and good; but if they separate again and go their own ways, it will be necessary for you and me to do the same, and track their respective footsteps."

This was getting into the matter considerably deeper than I had intended, but the lust of the chase must have been upon me, for I made no protest.

"In event of the latter happening," Phidias continued, "it will be important to name time and place for a rendezvous. Let me see. Perhaps, after all, as I am desirous of not inconveniencing you any more than possible, we had better say my apartments up-town and twelve o'clock midnight for the hour. This should give us a fair amount of leeway."

We soon crossed over Nassau Street and, passing in the shadow of the Sub-Treasury building, were drawing very near to the appointed spot. Just at the intersection of William there was quite a brilliant lamp.

"Look! There they are, I'll wager," whispered my companion.

Two persons, a man and a woman, were approaching one another directly in the range of the street-lamp. The man raised his hat. The pair stopped. The man handed the female a small package, at the same time saying something to her which we could not catch. Again the man raised his hat. They parted, each one continuing on in the same direction as before. It was all over in a second, as you might say.

"Take the woman," whispered Phidias, "I'll follow the man."

Before I well realized it, I found myself alone, walking steadily behind the recipient of the package.

"A pretty situation for a respectable country merchant to be discovered in," I could not help thinking to myself. "I wonder what my wife would say to this evening shadowing of a strange female in the streets of New York?"

However, I found my task to be an easy one and without any particularly dramatic elements. The woman went only as far as Wall Street, which she turned up, and, reaching Broadway, took a surface-car for up-town. She apparently gave no heed to me. There was no special reason for her doing so. Several other passengers got on the car at the same time as we did. I had a seat directly across from her and was able to make a very close scrutiny without attracting her attention to myself.

She looked to be a foreigner, but of what precise nationality I could not, from my own limited knowledge, well determine. She was about thirty, dark, well dressed, and would have been good-looking with ordinary eyes. Hers were abnormal, protruding from their sockets, with the whites all bloodshot and the pupils unduly dilated. They had a most ferocious glare, even in repose, and once or twice on our way up-town I saw them flash in the manner of a hungry and blood-thirsty wild beast. At these times I could not help but note that she twined her fingers still closer around the small parcel which the man had handed her.

As we drew near Ninth Street I could discern evident signs of a move upon her part. With this as a warning I was able to rise from my own seat quite naturally a second or two before she did, and follow her out of the car. I walked behind her down the street. After going some little distance she ascended the stoop of a house. The middle-aged matron who promptly answered her impatient ring cried,—

"Vy, Hilda, vere haf you peen?"

"Shust out for a walk," replied my quarry, and vanished inside with a hard, unnatural laugh.

The full glare of the lighted hall had shown me the little package still held tightly under one arm.

I was back in the easy-chair at Smythe's comfortable quarters a few minutes before eight o'clock. My part of the shadowing had taken but so much time. I wrote out a memorandum of what I had done, together with the number and street of the house to which I had followed the unsuspecting Hilda, in accordance with my chum's recent instructions; and then, taking up a magazine and charging a huge German student's pipe which hung from a hook under the mantel-piece, I waited as patiently as possible for the return of my fellow-conspirator.

Nine o'clock struck, then ten and eleven, and finally twelve. Still, he did not come. I fell into a doze in front of the dying fire, and when I again awoke and looked at the clock the hands pointed to two and after. I began to feel worried. I made mental pictures of all kinds of things that might have happened to my old chum. I grew well-nigh distracted. I cursed our idle expedition and my own participation in it with no uncertain meaning. I began to have thoughts of proceeding at once to the nearest police station and having a general alarm sent out for the missing man. I could not doubt but what something momentous must have occurred to prevent Phidias keeping the rendezvous he had himself made with so much earnestness. And yet, with it all, the fatigue of the past week's going about and sight-seeing was upon me, and I found myself dropping off into troubled naps at frequent intervals. From one of these dream-haunted periods

## The Abracadabra Affair

of semi-unconsciousness I was abruptly awakened by the voice of my chum's valet:

"Telegram for you, sir. For 'Oratio 'Arrison, sir," said the man, who had evidently been aroused from his own sleep by the messenger.

"Thank you, Jones," I replied, rather fearfully taking the yellow envelope from his outstretched hand.

The despatch read:

"POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK.

"I'm here. Can't possibly get back before nine morning. Meet me Grand Central Depot with carriage and best horses you can find. Don't fail, or will be tragedy to startle world.

"PHIDIAS."

"Hany hanswer, sir?" remarked Jones, with difficulty restraining a yawn, and calling me out of the state of astonishment into which I had been thrown by the message.

"No, you may go to bed," I managed to articulate.

The well-trained servant noiselessly withdrew.

Although feeling devoutly thankful at the apparent safety of my old chum, I found myself in almost as wretched a quandary as before the despatch arrived. Its latter portion was puzzling, to say the least. What on earth could my meeting Phidias with a carriage and the best horses procurable have to do in preventing a world-startling tragedy? Of course, I presumed that speed in getting him from the depot to some place was the all-important feature; but where? and how? and, also, why? I tried to build up some plausible theory, but, having only the wild-eyed Hilda and Smythe's telegram to start with, was unable to get very far. Finally, reasoning that if I were to properly play my part it was absolutely necessary for me to have a few hours' sleep, I threw myself upon the couch. I was unconscious almost as soon as my head touched the soft cushions, and yet it scarcely seemed that an instant could have elapsed when Jones called me some hours later.

"I felt sure that I could depend upon you, old chap," was my first greeting from Phidias as he threw himself into the carriage I had in waiting at the station. "You look worried. What's the trouble?"

"I followed the woman and——" I began.

"Tell me about it as we go along," my companion hastily interrupted. "We've got to reach the pier in quick time or——"

"What pier, sir?" queried the driver, who came to the door of the coach at this opportune moment.

"The —— Line pier, cabby," cried Phidias. "Twenty dollars if you make it before the Pennsylvania's passengers commence to land. That'll be in less than an hour. Can you do it?"

"I'll try hard enough, sir," answered the coachman, and, slamming

the door shut, he clambered up on his seat and started away at as great a speed as he dared in that crowded part of the city.

"For goodness' sakes, tell me what it is that you have discovered," I cried as soon as I could make myself heard above the clatter. "I've been on pins and needles ever since you first started in to elucidate that aba—whatd'youtcallit."

"Abracadabra," assented my companion placidly, "or, rather, cryptograph in abracadabra form, if you wish the exact classification. In olden times, you must know, when composed of the right kind of letters the abracadabra was believed by our confiding ancestors to be a sure cure for all manner of ills, from the loss of a kingdom to a dog-bite. The word is——"

"What are you going to do at the —— Line pier?" I demanded angrily.

"I don't exactly know," replied Phidias blandly.

"You don't know?" I howled.

"I've good reasons for wanting to get there in a hurry, but our course of action upon arrival must depend upon circumstances," he continued.

"Your telegram said something about a world-startling tragedy in prospect?" I remarked scornfully.

"Just so. But tell me your adventures last evening, and I'll give you the gist of mine. Perhaps the two together will throw more light upon matters about which I am still uncertain."

I narrated my shadowing experiences as clearly and briefly as possible. Phidias listened attentively and went into a short brown study; but it only ended in a sort of disconsolate shake of the head.

"I did not have quite such an easy time of it as you," he commenced after a while. "I followed my man to a number of places and managed to piece together some things I overheard and some things I saw, which give me two assured facts and one surmise."

"Tell me, quick, can't you?" I put in hastily, glancing out of the cab window. "We must be almost there."

"No. Five minutes or so yet," he replied, following my look with his own. "But, of course, I am going to tell you. This whole investigation is merely a specimen one for your amusement, you know."

"I can't say that I've had so much enjoyment out of it as to want to——" I began.

"The small parcel that the man handed to the woman at the corner of Pine and William Streets last evening contains an infernal machine,—a bomb that will blow up a whole house and kill all the people in the neighborhood if properly thrown," put in my companion mildly. "That is the first one of my assured facts."



I could not answer. I could not doubt. The earnest tone of my friend's voice carried conviction to my unwilling brain.

"The second assured fact is that the — Line pier, on or about the time of the landing of the Pennsylvania's passengers this morning, is to be the scene of something in connection with this bomb."

"Great Scott!" I ejaculated excitedly. "And we are going there. Into the open mouth of danger. Actually bribing a driver, who is galloping his horses this moment, in order that we may be in time to get blown to atoms by some crazy anarchists. And our participation in the matter is purely for the purpose of a little extra amusement for me while on my visit to your city. Thanks! I'll cry quits. I've had enough of this kind of fun. Cabby! I say, cabby! Stop! Let me out! Sto——"

But Phidias had thrown his arms around my shoulders and pulled me down into the seat again.

"My dear fellow," he remonstrated, "I have no intention of allowing you to run any risks, if I can help it. If my surmise is correct, and this we shall soon know, all will be well. In any event, you are to remain outside the zone of actual danger until I make certain. You wouldn't want me to hold back now, when we may be the means of preventing a horrible catastrophe, I hope?"

"Phidias, dear boy," I cried, "I'm heartily ashamed of myself, but I'm naturally timid and can't help it. I'll see you through this if it kill me. But no more of your investigations for me, if you please. This one is enough to last a lifetime."

"Nonsense, old chap," he put in laughingly. "Very few of them are so tragic. Sometimes I have more fun than a circus. Why, the last one——"

"What is your surmise in connection with this infernal machine and the landing passengers?" I persisted.

Phidias at once became grave again.

After a few seconds he said:

"I do not care to say anything about it just yet. In conducting these investigations I have become more or less of an expert in evolving theories from almost nothing, as it were; but the present instance is such a seemingly wild and hare-brained guess,—hullo!" interrupting himself, "we've stopped."

"Here we are, sir," called the cabby, rapidly descending from his perch, throwing open the door, and pointing with one flabby hand at the pier building. "They're just getting out the gang-planks, sir, so I have done what you—— Thankee, sir. You're a gentleman if ever——"

"Wait a few moments," cried Phidias, cutting short the driver's expressions of gratitude for the generous fee, "and, Horace," turning



towards me, "stay here in the cab till I come. You're perfectly safe," he added in an undertone.

I made an effort to accompany him. I am willing to admit that it was only a feeble one, for, to me, this tampering with edged tools in the shape of infernal machines intended for somebody else was a peril against which my whole being cried out in loathing. But Phidias forced me back in the coach and went off.

The agony of remorse, anxiety, and mental dismay that I suffered in that short waiting interval it is impossible for me to describe. But it came to an end at last, and one look at his triumphant and smiling face as he hurried towards me was a splendid tonic.

"It's all right, Horace. Come along and see the finish of your specimen investigation," he panted. "If it doesn't surprise and give you something to talk about for the rest of your days, I'll—but hurry! All you've got to do is to follow me, look wise, and say nothing more than you can help."

My companion preceded me into the long pier building, thronged with waiting people. In passing a gang-plank leading down from the Pennsylvania, along which a steady stream of newly arrived passengers were gleefully pouring, I clutched the arm of my old chum with renewed terror.

"See! There is Hilda," I gasped, and paused irresolutely.

The awful-eyed woman was standing alone, but rather behind a little knot of handkerchiefs-wavers. In her fingers she clutched the same small package she had received so mysteriously, and which Phidias had assured me contained an infernal machine of mighty power. She was evidently watching for the appearance of some expected person upon the gang-plank.

"Never mind," returned my companion reassuringly, dragging me reluctantly onward. "Their plans have been completely forestalled. Only the express wishes of another prevents me from taking the risk of personally denouncing her to the authorities. However, perhaps it is all for the best."

As one in a dream, I found myself, a few minutes later, upon the deck of the steamship, remote from the point of bustling departure. A pleasant-faced gentleman was saying something to us of a congratulatory nature. A small, glittering object and a foreign-looking money bill were placed in my hands, and I vaguely saw that Phidias had been similarly provided. Then a ship's officer approached our group, and I heard him say to the pleasant-faced gentleman:

"I've arranged with the captain of the tug-boat that's alongside, sir, as you requested, to take you and your servant and baggage across to the Erie Depot in Jersey City. The men are putting out a gang-way to her for you now, sir."

Still like one in a dream, I found myself back in the coach again, driving up-town.

"We are Chevaliers of the Order of—— I give up. It is too much of a crackjaw word for me," my chum was saying as he examined the jewelled decoration with languid curiosity. "And, what is still more to the point, we have each received the equivalent of about one thousand dollars as a slight token of the appreciation in which our timely services were held."

"It can't be possible that——" I began.

Phidias extracted a little volume from his capacious pockets and rapidly turned over the leaves until he came to a number of small portraits.

"Do you recognize it?" he asked, indicating a certain one, and at the same time pointing to the name beneath it with his thumbnail. "These potentates are not such stay-at-homes as most people imagine. He is travelling around the world in the very strictest of incognitos, unknown to his very consort and ministers, in fact; and yet, somehow, these bloodhounds have been informed. We have saved him from assassination."

"The King of——" I began.

"Sh!" interrupted my companion. "This must be kept secret. These New York cabmen have wonderful ears."



## AT WINTER'S END

BY CALE YOUNG RICE

THE weedy fallows winter-worn  
Where cattle shiver under sodden hay,  
The ploughlands long and lorn—  
The fading day.

The sullen shudder of the brook,  
And winds that wring the writhen trees in vain  
For drearier sound or look—  
The lonely rain.

The crows that train o'er desert skies  
In endless caravans that have no goal  
But flight—where darkness flies—  
From Pole to Pole.

The sombre zone of hills around  
That shrink in misty mournfulness from sight. . .  
With sunset aureoles crowned  
Before the night.

# FOR THE HONOR OF HIS WIFE

*By Charles H. Caffin*



“**M**EDDLERS!”

Edward Fortescue re-read the concluding sentence, “No offence is intended, but your friends think it best to warn you,” and ejected a long-drawn “Ah!” between his teeth.

“But I must control myself; it is only a practical joke, yet a cursed poor one.”

He rammed the anonymous document into his pocket, set his hat carefully upon his head, well forward and a little to one side, and started to walk to the theatre. He walked leisurely; self-absorbed, with the old-time tragedian’s habitual impressiveness of tread; very mannered, very restrained, with elaborate manœuvrings of the legs while covering little ground.

He was one of the old stock, who “played the provinces;” tall, square-shouldered, large-hearted; unmistakably, yet quietly, self-assertive. In his own firmament, and this was the only one he ever considered, he was the centre; the rest of the company moved round him, drawn towards him or propelled, and borrowing their light from him, while the outer circle of bodies, the public, submitted to his attraction. So his mannerism was entirely without affectation. It fitted him even more closely than his clothes, and was as much a part of him as the smile which relaxed his broad, straight mouth, or the light in his eyes which softened the stern face when he patted the cheek of some little child.

He had been born, so to speak, upon the boards; that is to say, when the shadow of the coming event began to gray the face of his mother, she just slipped from the publicity of leading-lady into the humbler, necessary duties of the wardrobe room, where she crooned her quiet “Magnificat,” darning at royal robes or hemming little white garments. By and by, when the young mother reappeared before the footlights,—with perhaps a little more seriousness in her girlish face and, certainly, a deeper tone in her voice,—the wee tragedian of the future lay rolled in a shawl on the O. P. side, sheltered by a scrap of scenery on which was pinned the warning, originated by the low-comedian, “Hic jacet Ted.”

What a night it was, a few years later, for the mother and child

when the youngster came on for the first time in a speaking part, as Prince Arthur, and implored his own father not to put out his eyes. Why, there was scarcely a dry eye behind the scenes and the women would have smothered him with kisses, but he broke from them and ran to the stage-manager to ask if he would get a call. And, sure enough, he did. When the drop was pulled back, he drew himself up, as he had seen his father do, and started to stride before the floats; then suddenly halted and ran back to his mother, taking her hand and leading her on with him. She was crying like a child, but the boy made his bow to the audience and his bow to her, and again his bow to the house, and backed out as sure of himself and what was due to him as any old player. The spectators were beside themselves with delight, and the boys in the pit collected two shillings and three half-pence in coppers and handed them up. It was indeed a great night, and when the little fellow gave a chubby handful of greasy pennies to each of the scene-shifters, you couldn't have seen across the stage for the dust, raised by the tumultuous applause.

Well, all this was forty years ago; but still the child had been very much the father to the man. His life had been cribbed within the narrow confines of the little kingdom of painted shows; he had grown into his larger share in it, but was still a child in many ways, with a child's entire belief and satisfaction in itself, its ignorance of sin, and tender-heartedness. As he paced the street, little boys and girls stopped their play with a "Wish you good morning, Mr. Fortescue," and wondered why on this particular occasion he did not return their greeting with that kindly ceremony which made him seem a greater person than anybody they knew, not excepting the Mayor, though his Honor did wear a gold chain when he went in state to church on Charity Sunday.

But this morning Fortescue was absorbed. He was repeating to himself the words of the document, "Have an eye to Pennell; he is a buck with the women."

Pennell was leading walking gentleman; handsome, young, with a tinge of something more genteel than the others. He had spent two terms at Oxford, leaving suddenly—financial difficulties, he would explain in his airy manner. But Roger Jenkins, who had travelled the Oxford circuit, hinted at a woman in the case, having a very conservative distrust of a gentleman on the stage and resenting what he called "the damned coxcomb's cursed dandified airs."

Could Jenkins be behind the communication? If so, small reliance was to be attached to it.

Still, little was known of Pennell, except that he was new to the business and had proved an apt learner,—so apt that he was already playing the juvenile leads. However, Fortescue would keep his eyes open.

"No offence is intended, but your friends think it best to warn you." This was a riddle; there could be no offence in warning him of what might affect the honor of his "family." "Your friends," too—it was put as a favor, personal to him.

Well, well! he would be watchful; perhaps mention the matter to Flora, his young wife. Her position gave her the right and duty to watch over the younger members of the company. Possibly she could throw some light upon the riddle. So he let the subject slip from his mind for the present.

"A nipping and an eager air," he sung out cherrily to Jerry, the doorkeeper. The old man shook his head as he watched the figure disappear in the dark passage that led up to the stage.

"There be land-rats and water-rats," he muttered, "God help him."

It was a busy day for Fortescue, with more than the usual amount of rehearsing, for on the morrow was his annual benefit, and "Othello" was to be presented by special request.

Oreborough was a factory town of blast furnaces, low, shed-like foundries, gray-stone, dingy houses, and narrow, cobbled streets, with a pall of smoke-laden air that shut out the sun and choked vegetation. It was devoted to the theatre, and found a relief from the tragedy of its own existence in that of the stage. "Othello" always drew a full house; on this occasion it would be crowded to the roof, since Mrs. Fortescue was to play Desdemona for the first time.

How much this meant to her husband one can believe. He had been married scarcely a year. Till then, she had played but small parts, and it had been his joy to train her for the leading business. Ah! the past year had been a happy one for him!

To your true actor the stage-life is the real one, the other only incidental. It is a dream-land through which one moves with the eyes wide open; in which shadows pass for substance and the yellow footlights outstare God's great sun. In such Fortescue had lived, feeding upon illusions. When he came to years of loving, the love that consumed him was the idealized passion for the stage heroines; not for flesh or spirit of the women who impersonated them, but for the abstract conception of the character as his own artist mind conceived it.

When the young slip of a girl joined his company at the beginning of the previous season her earnestness and perseverance had attracted him; her beauty too, which made him think her the one who would realize for him his ideal conceptions. So he offered her marriage on an illusive basis, quite unintelligible to the slim Flora; but she took him gladly for husband, being ambitious. In this way he ministered to her ideals as she to his. For the rest—the human intimacy of the man and woman union was a closed book, which she had no wish to open and he had overlooked.



Meanwhile the rehearsal proceeded, Pennell playing Cassio and Jenkins, Iago. The new Desdemona walked through her part with a demure graciousness that appealed to Fortescue quite strangely. Often as he had played the part before, he felt to-day a queer sense of impropriety in the terrible suspicion that Othello harbors against his wife; something of the man and the husband interfered with the detachment of the actor. To address such reproaches to *her*—for the first time the woman and the actress were becoming separated in his mind. A feeling of modesty came between her and him in their scenes,—surprising to himself, causing a little falter of voice at times, that did not escape the notice of a bunch of wagging heads which watched him narrowly from the corner of the stage. Jenkins was in the group; so too the regular leading woman, who was playing second to Fortescue's chit of a wife.

The rehearsal lasted far on into the afternoon, when the company dispersed, leaving the chief still engrossed with details to be discussed with the carpenter.

It was evening by the time he started from the theatre; but there was no lack of light. Across the street a stretch of blast-furnaces darted forth their yellow tongues into the dark sky; the sheds were open, separated from the road only by a picket fence; dusky forms moved against the glowing patches of crimson fire. Fortescue knew the scene well and loved it. To his actor's instinct it had always appealed as a stupendous picture, a mighty drama. To-night, as he stopped to gaze, it was more: a grand embodiment of human endeavor, to which, in a strange, new way, his own self had some relation. What had been only a spectacle, began to be part of a still larger something in which he too was a living part. With an increased sense of strength he pursued his way. The glare extended as far as the house in which he lived. As he neared it, he saw the figure of a man upon the door-steps; a few paces more and he could make out that it was Pennell and he was holding the hand of Flora. He held it needlessly long for an ordinary greeting; seemed to be talking earnestly, and then made a movement towards the woman, who stepped back into the shadow of the door with her hand only visible, raised as if in a gesture of self-protection. A moment later the young man disappeared down the street and the door closed.

That was all that Fortescue saw, and he saw it merely as a picture, a situation; such was the habit of his mind. Then, an instant afterwards, the recollection of the anonymous letter fell upon him like a thunderbolt, and with the blow came a flashing realization of its meaning.

Pennell's freedom with women; the friendly warning to him: it was his wife who was in danger; her honor and his that were threatened. The bolt dazed him.



To every man comes a moment when the issues of a lifetime hang upon a thread. It was come to Fortescue, and he was as a child in his helpless ignorance of what to do. The actor for the first time in his life was fully conscious that he was a man, and knew the incarnation of his artistic dreams to be a woman and his wife.

This sudden realization of manhood poured in upon him like a flood, sweeping away the power to reason, and with this crude animal sensation came a profound respect for the womanhood of his wife. To hint to her his doubts would be an insult beyond all comprehension. His poor brain was blank. Some men would have walked on into the night, beyond the limits of the town, seeking in the cool darkness alleviation of the shock. The instinct of a lifetime turned him towards the theatre.

He crept back along the walls of the silent houses, with the glare of the furnaces full in his face. God! how lurid they were, a fell, horrible nightmare of human despair—restless, hideous. Those yellow tongues of flame licked away the purity of the night, leering, snickering, leaping like the slanders of hell. The fitting shadow forms were devil's doubts, and the roar of flame and clang of metal seemed part of his throbbing brain.

Letting himself into the theatre, he crept along the black corridor and stumbled on to the stage, scattering the rats that were nosing after the remains of the actors' lunch.

Up and down in the darkness, across and back again across the stage he paced, trying to steady his brain and finding comfort in the seeming immensity of the darkness and the hollow stillness of the big house. A drowning man catches at a straw: the habit of his life is action and to preserve it he must act. But the habit of Fortescue had been to find the real in the sham, to live in dreams. The most beautiful of his dreams had suddenly become a hideous nightmare, and at the same moment some power had shaken him into wakefulness and told him the nightmare was a fact. Instinct assured him that to save his reason he must force back the nightmare into the realm of imagination. So, not considering why, but following brute impulses, as the caged beast paces back and forth in piteous, methodic way, he trod the stage, until the monotony of the movement dulled his misery.

By and by the moon reached the line of the small window behind the gallery, and a stream of light cut through the void of the house and fell upon the stage in a yellow splash. His returning footsteps brought him to the spot and the light arrested his attention. He stopped, looked up and along the light,—vacant-eyed, motionless. The moon-stream lapped his white face, slowly assuaging with its placid solace, until in the vacant brain the actor's memory began to wake:

"But soft! what light from yonder window breaks!" Stealing into the aching void, flooding it with gentle radiance, kindly comfort, the

music of the Balcony Scene began to murmur in his brain. Juliet's presence was felt, and the lover's heart went out to meet it; and with such a new sense of love. On and on his mind pursued the impassioned words, pouring forth full and fuller devotion of self, growing moment by moment to clearer knowledge of the terrible delight of man's love for the woman, for the flesh and blood, the warmth and feel and sight of her. The need of woman was at last upon him; and in the exultation of realized manhood came the necessity to believe in that one woman. Absolute intolerance of suspicion, of doubt of any kind; entire and soul-consuming trust—there lay his only escape from madness.

Presently he lay down and slept upon the hard boards as peacefully as fifty years ago when he was a baby, becoming once again, through love, "as a little child."

Morning found him restlessly alert. The strain of the previous night had quickened every fibre of his being. As to a man who has escaped death from drowning, the daylight brought to him a quickened sense of life, a wider, deeper conviction of its possibilities. The business of the day was preparation for the evening. The tragedy of "Othello" had a new meaning for him; he would play with the horrible theme as he had never played before, realizing the power of suspicion better because he had fought and downed it; every scene should be a declaration of his wife's innocence and of the hideousness of doubt. And when he had killed the pure, loved thing, he would take her home, no longer Desdemona, and tell her of his nightmare, of his newly discovered manhood, and court and win her for her womanhood.

The old people of Oreborough still talk of that performance of "Othello." The house was packed to the roof. They will tell you that Fortescue never acted so well as on this memorable night. As a fact, he never acted less. His performance was a tremendous assertion of personal feeling; the artifices of the actor were effaced by the emotion of the man. It was Fortescue, and not Othello, who appeared that night.

When he finished his declaration before the senators, the words rang out like a challenge,—

"Here comes the lady; let her answer it."

In her all doubt was set at rest.

Then what a letting loose of thankful conviction in his speech to Desdemona later:

"Lo my soul's joy!  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have wakened death!"

So far Fortescue was master of himself. The ordeal began with the insinuations of Iago. But calmly confident was his reply:

"I heard thee say even now—Thou lik'dst not that,  
When Cassio left my wife: What did'st not like?"

Yet as the scene proceeds, and the words of doubt were put into his mouth, the tension upon his power of control was terrible. As an actor, he could have let his passion fly and beckoned it back to his wrist; but to-night he was giving of himself, and each start and recoil of passion ripped his very heart-strings. While the horror of the plot unfolded, the torrent of his emotion swelled. He had set out to control it, to play with it; whereas it was sweeping him headlong into a devil's game. Iago's diabolical imaginings seemed, more and more, foul slurs upon his wife; his own enforced acquiescence, still fouler insult. More and more, it was she and he who were being swallowed up in the hideous infamy. The actor became entirely lost in the man, and the egoism which before had been his strength was now his torture, confusion, and undoing. He, he, he—all the time in his foolish, enfeebled, infuriated brain it was he, Fortescue, around whom the tragedy rolled and thickened; he, forced by the iron necessity of the moment into suspicions that he knew to be false, lashed in defiance of everything that was dear, necessary to his very existence, into vile words against the woman whose innocence he would uphold before a world of slander. The coil was closing round him, like a strait jacket round the madman, maddening him more and more. Brain could not sustain the conflict, the snap of sanity must come.

It came upon the words,—

"Villain, be sure thou prove my wife a——"

He caught himself upon the final word of shame, and with the bellow of a tortured bull sprang upon Iago and pinned him by the throat. Cheers filled the theatre. They fed his fury, and he fastened still tighter his fingers into the flesh. He had lost all consciousness of Iago or his fellow-actor. Gathered up in his two hands was all the foul slander that had been uttered against his wife. He was crushing it utterly and forever, kneading out its venom, until it should be white, cold "as her chastity."

And all the while the yells of the audience grew in fierce and fiercer vehemence, as he swung the helpless body. Every barrier to his emotion was gone; in a vast flood it swept on and on, until it plunged down, down, down, in glorious abandonment, the madman's moment of supreme rapture.

Then again it reached a level, tumultuous, uncertain, all confused, and he stood peering across the footlights, while the body slipped from

his grasp. Waves of hot, dust-laden air surged upon his hotter temples; the yells closed round his ears; all the place was trembling with the stamp of feet.

The madman's hell seemed to open in front of him with the squeal of thousands of devils shrieking invitation.

"If I love her not chaos is come again."

He turned as if to fly; the company were crowding on; he saw his wife, ran and caught her hand and drew her to the centre of the stage.

Then, facing chaos, he cried, exultant, "Chaste, chaste!" and fell.



## AT OCAHD

BY LOUISE DRISCOLL

YEARELY at the spring-time's dawning fair  
We journey to Ocahd our tents to set,  
And thither Northern merchants may  
be met  
Who bargain shrewd and Eastern treasures  
get,  
And all the tribes of Araby are there.

Three days a truce is held, old feuds are gone;  
Two days the merchants tarry. On the third  
No sound but feast and festival is heard,  
No fierce encounter, no unfriendly word.  
That night we fold our tents and journey on.

Yearly the council where our wise men be  
Offers a prize for who shall sweetest sing.  
Abdulla Hamed hung from his lute-string  
So many prizes as four years may bring,  
And showed with pride where all the fifth  
should see.

That year there rose a song as Paradise  
Had opened wide its gates unto men's gaze.  
One saw and felt. One heard a thousand  
ways  
With every sense. New senses, like new  
days,  
Seemed dawning in strange glory to men's eyes.

Who sang had been beside me every day  
In the past year. I thought him silent then;  
I did not know that weary, grave-eyed men  
Held in their hearts what Israfil again  
Touches his lute-heart with in spirit ways.

It is not youth who learns the sweetest songs.  
Abdulla Hamed could not know the touch  
That comes from being tender overmuch;  
Who has been sad and now is patient,  
such  
Is he to whom the singing-prize belongs.

And now I look on every common face  
With a new feeling, for I cannot tell  
What holy song may in its secret dwell.  
So the tribe wanders, and we buy and sell,  
And journey onward from the market-place.

# MUSIC OF SHAKSPERE'S TIME\*

*By Sidney Lanier*



## PART II.

IN any reading you may do of the literature of this period you will be apt to come frequently across the term "Discant." In Shakspeare's time that great species of musical form which bore this name may be said to have reached its climax. It had been a long time in doing so, however, for in order to understand clearly the kind of music which for so many years—nay, for so many centuries—ministered to the souls of our elders in this world, we must go back a thousand years beyond Shakspeare.

In the latter part of the sixth century Pope Gregory the Great collected and published a number of melodies which had long been employed in the church service, including, it is said, several melodies of his own composition. This collection was called his *Antiphonarium*: great store was set by it, insomuch that it was kept fastened by a chain to the altar of St. Peter's, in order that it might be convenient for reference and for future additions to, or alterations in, the melodies which it contained.

Now these melodies, thus brought definitely together by St. Gregory, played a part of paramount importance in music for a thousand years on and more. You have all heard of what is called the "Gregorian Chant." This is a term applied to the tunes contained in the *Antiphonarium* of Gregory's. Observe that only a part of these tunes were composed by Gregory. A large number of them were already in existence and had been from time immemorial. Let me call your attention to this circumstance here, which has a most important bearing on the matter of the present lecture. Nowadays, when we think of a musical composer, we regard him as one who originates melodies, one who gives fresh tunes to the world.

You will find, as I proceed in the development of my subject, that one great and cardinal distinction of modern music as opposed to the music of Shakspeare's time is that the composers of that period did *not* address themselves to the invention of new tunes so much as to the contrapuntal treatment of old tunes.

A number of ingenious devices, which I shall presently explain, were

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invented by which an old tune could be redacted into a wonderful variety of musical effects while still preserving at least the outline of its individuality.

It would be an inquiry of deep fascination, even to many who have no special interest in music, to trace the origin of these melodies, known now as the Gregorian Chants, which for so many ages formed the stock in trade of all musical invention in Europe. For almost the very first step in the inquiry leads us back from the sort of music which Shakspeare was accustomed to hear, to the sort of music which our Lord Jesus Christ was accustomed to hear. Permit me in a dozen words to point out at least the path which this inquiry would follow.

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I have said that Pope Gregory found a number of tunes in existence, which he noted and fixed for succeeding ages. Two hundred years before Gregory's time an event somewhat similar occurred in the history of music which I, for one, can never recall to myself without emotion. In the end of the fourth century Bishop Ambrose, of Milan, together with his people, suffered great affliction under the relentless persecutions of the Arian Empress Justina. It is a naïve and touching witness to that ideal of the connection between music and the needs of our every-day life, which all fervent musicians should cherish and exalt, that the good Bishop Ambrose, for the explicit purpose of consolation in the midst of these afflictions, called in the aid of music. Expressly for the solace of his suffering people, he ordained that psalms and hymns should be sung antiphonally in the churches, and he organized many musical details to this end, perfecting the scale by a Greek tetrachord which he selected, and finally giving rise to what was known as the Ambrosian chant.

Here we find in the fourth century still a stock of tunes constituting the body of music, and it was this stock which Gregory afterwards fixed and increased.

The next step backward takes us from the fourth century to the second. In the year 110 Pliny the Younger wrote a letter to Trajan, in which he describes the Christians as "meeting on a certain day before daylight and singing by turns a hymn to Christ as to a God."

And the next step in this inquiry takes us to Christ Himself.

On that climacteric evening, when He and His disciples sat at their last supper, after He had blessed the bread and given it to them as His body, and the wine as His blood, and had declared: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom," it would seem that the emotions of the moment had risen to that point where words do not bring comfort; and so I find the might of music



working in the next verse (of Matthew xxvi. 30), which records, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." If we knew the tune of that hymn!

Here, you observe, as far back as the beginning of our era, we find the world in possession of a stock of tunes. There can be little doubt that the melodies which the disciples sung with Christ in person were handed down and formed the body of those collections which Bishop Ambrose, and after him Pope Gregory, brought together, and it is possible enough that the hymn which Christ and His Apostles sung was sung yesterday in some church of America, for we have tunes in our Psalmody—not to speak of the Gregorian tunes still surviving as Plain Chant in the Catholic churches—which have come down from quite immemorial times, and the path of church music, as I have shown, leads directly back to this hymn which was sung on the evening of the Last Supper.

It leads, in truth, much farther back than that: the Greek melodies which must have formed the body of the apostolic hymns carry us to times long before the Christian era; to old Pagan Greek times, to old Hebrew times, nay, to old Egyptian times.

But to go further in that direction is not within the scope of the present paper. I have given this brief sketch of the tunes by which the Christians always testified (as Tertullian hath it—"Apology," chap. 30) "in singing their prayers . . . that they did not worship as men without hope," in order to call your attention to the corpus of melody which presented itself when the composers of Shakspeare's time began their work. This corpus consisted mainly of the Gregorian Chants, with such additions and improvements as had been here and there struck out by the labors of isolated genius.



Now the general method of treating these fundamental bases of music—or tunes—in Shakspeare's time was that which was called *discant*. Perhaps as good a definition of *discant* as any occurs in Richard Edwards's notable old play of "Damon and Pythias," the first tragedy lightened with comedy which we have, dating from 1564, the year of Shakspeare's birth. Here it is said that the Collier sings a "bussing bass," while two of his fellows, Jack and Will, "quiddell upon it."

You will get a more vivid idea of *discant* in general from a single example than from hours of description. If, therefore, we analyze in the briefest way a composition of this sort, you will immediately perceive the fundamental idea upon which all the varieties of *discant* were based.

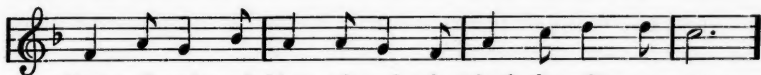
For this purpose I have selected a piece which will illustrate at once the church music and the secular music of the period, to wit,



But again: if when the upper voice, Jack, had reached his ninth bar, and Will his fifth bar, still another singer—we will say Dick—commences the first bar of the same melody with Jack and Will and then sings straight on, it will harmonize; and again, if a sixth singer—whom we must call Harry—commences the same melody at the end of the next four bars—that is, when Jack is beginning his thirteenth bar—and sings on, we will have six voices going in a true six-part song. This is, in point of fact, the plan of the "Cuckoo-Song:" it was written for six voices. The whole melody is as follows:



Sum - er is y . . cum - en in . . . Lhud - e sing cuc - cu.



Grow - eth sed and blow - eth med and springth the wdè - e nu.



Sing cuc - cu.



Here you have a general illustration of contrapuntal treatment. This particular method was called "canon in the unison with a burden;" and you can easily see how many varieties there might be, giving rise to the motet, the fugue, the round, and others which it would be too technical to specify here. There were also methods of varying the melody itself; one of these was called "prolation," where the notes were extended to twice or more times their original length; another method, the opposite of prolation, was "division," where each note, instead of being lengthened, was divided into two or more parts, this

being the method indicated in the quotation from 1st Henry IV., which speaks of a tune

" Sung by a fair Queen in a summer's bower,  
With ravishing division to her lute."

If these discants and variations were extempore,—that is, if the Collier should sit down and buss his turn and Will and Jack should strike in with extemporized parts to harmonize with it,—it was called "extempore discant;" if there were written parts, it was called "prick song,"—that is, song pricked or dotted with points on the paper.

This description of discant carries us to the original of the word counterpoint: the melody being dotted down in points on the paper, when one part ran along counter with the other, as in the quiddelling of Jack and Will and the Collier the points or notes would of course be counter, and the system of part-music thus began to be called counterpoint.

The method of discant is vividly implied in two terms which were much in use at this time, and which survive to this day in certain connections. The melody or tune which was usually put in the tenor as the basis of one of these quiddelling compositions was simple and came to be called "plain song" or "plain chant," in opposition to the complex contrapuntal parts moving along with it; and this general name shows the connection between the Gregorian melodies and the subjects of such compositions, the term now used in the Catholic Church for the Gregorian Service and melodies being "plain chant." The simple melody is also still called in contrapuntal science *cantus firmus*, or *canto fermo*, i.e., the firm song,—in distinction from the changing counterpoint built upon it.

◆

Of the rage among musicians in the sixteenth century after this part-music, and of the extent to which it was cultivated,—particularly in church compositions,—it is difficult to give an adequate idea. Perhaps a story which is told of Dr. John Bull, a celebrated English musician of this period, will sufficiently illustrate it. It was said that Dr. Bull, after having attained great eminence in counterpoint, went travelling on the continent to see if he could learn something new in the art. In this course, without revealing his name, he engaged himself as a pupil to the organist of St. Omer's. One day this musician took his supposed pupil into a room connected with the cathedral and showed him a composition written in forty parts, boasting that he had exhausted the resources of counterpoint and that the man did not live who could add another part to the piece. The pretended pupil asked

for pens, ink, and music-paper, and requested to be left alone in the room for an hour or two. After a while he called in the musician, and showed him his piece with not only one new part, but forty new parts, added. The musician at first would not believe it, but upon trying them over several times and finding them correct beyond doubt, suddenly exclaimed, "You must be either the devil or Dr. Bull," and—the narrator quaintly adds—he thereupon fell at the Doctor's feet "and adored him." Of course, a piece with eighty different parts is absurdly impossible, and I have related this story simply to show the wild excesses of counterpoint in the sixteenth century.

Inasmuch as these songs were much sung by children in the great churches in Elizabeth's reign, one trembles to think of the drilling which the poor little wretches must have had to undergo. There is, indeed, a circumstance connected herewith which makes one tremble still more, and quite reconciles one to the nineteenth century with all its faults. I mean the custom in Elizabeth's time of actually impressing children and carrying them off from their homes for service in the cathedral choirs. A royal writ signed by Elizabeth is preserved which runs thus: "Wee therefore by the tenour of these presents will and require that ye permit and suffer . . . our said servants Thos. Gyles and his deputie or deputies to take up in any cathedral or collegiate churches and in every other place . . . of this our realm of England and Wales suche child or children as he or they shall finde and like of, and the same child . . . for the use and service aforesaid with them . . . to bring awaye without anye your lette, contradictions, staye, or interruption to the contrairie;" and another section of this dreadful instrument charges every one to help these officers in performing their unnatural duty.

I find an allusion in Shakspeare that brings vividly before us a noble old psalm-tune of his time which is very familiar to all our modern ears.

In "Merry Wives of Windsor," Act II., Scene 1, where Mistress Page is discussing Jack Falstaff's letter with her sparkling gossip, Mrs. Ford, the latter lady says: ". . . I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words; but they do no more adhere together than the hundredth psalm to the tune of 'Green Sleeves.'" The tune of this hundredth psalm was that majestic melody which we all now associate with the Doxology, "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow," and it would seem, from Mistress Ford's use of it, to have been as strongly placed in the popular esteem in the sixteenth century as in the nineteenth. I find it associated with the name of Claude Lejeune in the early collections, but only as arranger, not as author.

In coming now to speak of the secular music of Shakspeare's time,

we find the madrigal, the catch, and the ballad standing out as the most prominent vocal forms of it.

The original madrigal seems to have been a song of the same nature with the "vilanella," or country-song; it was usually built upon a proverb or common saying, and this suggests to my mind the most natural derivation of the word—from "madre," Spanish for mother—upon the idea of the madrigal being at first a mother-song, or nursery-song, just as you will presently see the songs of our own Mother Goose appearing as the words of popular catches in Shakspeare's time.

The structure of the madrigal was peculiar. After what was said of the "Cuckoo-Song,"—which is a canon in the unison with the addition of a pes, or burden,—you will easily understand from a slight illustration how the madrigal differed from it. Here are the opening phrases of a beautiful madrigal by Thomas Weelkes, dating from 1597. It was written to that quaint-measured poem attributed to Shakspeare in the "Passionate Pilgrim," which you will all remember from the first lines,

" My flocks feed not,  
My ewes breed not,  
My rams speed not,  
All is amisse.

" Love is dying,  
Faith's defying,  
Heart's denying,  
Causer of this."



Here we have not a "canon in the unison," as in the "Cuckoo-Song"—that is, one voice singing exactly the same notes as the other at definite intervals of rest—but a partial canon of a different sort: the second voice sings the same melody with the first two bars, but in a different key, and then passes off into a new phrase of its own, making a kind of echo, or report, of the first voice; again the third voice comes in here with the same melody of the two first bars of the first voice, only this time neither in unison nor in a different key, but in the octave below,—thus making a different kind of echo, or report, to the other two voices. And so it runs on throughout the madrigal, a little phrase cunningly reappearing in some new form from each voice here and there, like birds answering each other in a wood.

The first English madrigals appear to have been written by the



William Bird whom I mentioned just now. Foreign madrigals, set to Italian words, had appeared before, and it seemed to be doubted for a time whether English words would go to madrigals; but this doubt was soon solved by the appearance of successful madrigals written to English translations of Italian poems, and then to original English poems.

Of the lighter kinds of secular music the catch was the most popular, and we find many allusions to it in Shakspeare's plays.

In the catch proper there was some trick or catch in the words, as in that famous one of Calcott's, where the first voice sings "Ah, how Sophia," and the next "catches" this with the phrase "A house a-fire," which in the rapid pronunciation of that time would sound much like "Ah, how Sophia."

The round, however, is often confounded with the catch; musically they do not differ, both the round and the catch being varieties of the "canon in the unison" illustrated by the upper parts of the "Cuckoo-Song."

When I was a boy we used to sing a very familiar round which began, "Scotland's burning, Scotland's burning, Fire, fire, fire, fire, cast on water, cast on water," etc.

It is interesting to find among the rounds and catches of Shakspeare's time some early forms of the nursery-rhymes which appear in our "Mother Goose." For example, in Act IV., Scene 1, of "Taming of the Shrew," where Grumio has been sent ahead to Petruchio's country-house to make a fire before he and his bride arrive, presently Petruchio's other servant, Curtis, comes in, and the fire being built, calls out to Grumio, "There's fire ready; and therefore, good Grumio, the news?"

"Why," says Grumio, "Jack boy! ho boy! and as much news as thou wilt."

This Jack boy, ho boy is unintelligible until you know that these are the first words of a popular catch in Shakspeare's time which ran as follows:

"Jack boy, ho boy,—news!  
The cat is in the well.  
Let us ring now for her knell.  
Ding, ding, dong, bell!"

in which you recognize the rhyme of "Mother Goose."

It is rather a curious coincidence that when I had written thus far I happened to turn to this scene between Grumio and Curtis in "Taming of the Shrew" for another purpose, when I came upon an allusion I had never before observed, to the very round which I had just mentioned as being commonly sung in my boyhood, the "Scotland's burning, Fire, fire, cast on water," etc.

A few lines before Grumio flouts Curtis with his "Jack boy, ho boy," Grumio, half-frozen by the cold, is alone trying to get a fire which he has to see started before his master, Petruchio, arrives with the bride. As he is shouting forth his complaints of the cold, Curtis, his fellow-servant, enters with the exclamation,—

"Who is that calls so loudly?"

"*Gr.* A piece of ice; if thou doubt it, thou mayst slide from my shoulder to my heel with no greater a run but my head and my neck. A fire, good Curtis.

"*Curt.* Is my master and his wife coming, Grumio?

"*Gr.* O, ay, Curtis, ay; and therefore, fire, fire, cast on no water."

This "fire, fire, cast on no water," is evidently a phrase out of the round "Scotland's burning."

Two notable collections of catches of this period were called, one Pammelia,—which is Greek for All the Melodies—and another called Deuteromelia, or Second Melodies, being a sort of second part to Pammelia. The words to these catches consist of all manner of sense and nonsense. For instance, one—and a rather ghastly one—was in the nature of an epitaph and expressed the following atrocious sentiments:

"Here lies a woman, who can deny it:  
She died in peace tho' she lived unquiet;  
Her husband prays, if o'er her grave you walk,  
You would tread soft,—for if she wake, she'll talk."

Another, which contained some good sonorous vowels for roaring, was this:

"Nose, nose, nose, nose,  
Who gave thee that jolly red nose?  
Sinamont and ginger, nutmegs and cloves,  
And that gave me my jolly red nose."

Which recalls that famous song, in the nature of a catch, sung by Iago in Othello, Act III., Scene 3:

"Then let me the cannikin clink, clink,  
And let me the cannikin clink;  
A soldier's a man,  
And life's but a span,  
Why then let a soldier drink."



I must leave the subject of ballads—which were spelled "ballets" in this time, or "fa las" as they were often called—in order to say something, if only of the briefest, about the instrumental music of Shakspeare's time.

It is proper, before quite abandoning the subject of vocal music, to mention that a favorite mode of it in Shakspeare's time—and a curious one to us, I fancy—was that of musical declamation accompanied by an instrument. This was the recitativo accompagnate of the Italians, sometimes called *musica narrativa*, or music in which a story could be told. Its introducer in England and most eminent illustrator was Nicholas Lanier.

For example, a celebrated masque was written by Ben Jonson and Nicholas Lanier to be performed in the style of recitativo accompagnate. Not only was the music of this masque written by Lanier, but he performed the vocal part of it, reciting the poems in the *musica narrativa* way with great effect. Lanier did not confine himself, however, to the recitative, but wrote many other musical compositions which appear in the later collections of the time.

The music for the virginals was usually a melody of some sort—a dance-tune, or old air—played by one hand while the other executed all manner of endless variations upon it. Several of these compositions of contemporary writers remain to us, notably a collection of them in what is known as “Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book,” and they show passages of such difficulty as must have required great technic for their execution upon the instruments of that time.

A third sort of instrumental music—and perhaps the most highly esteemed, as such—is indicated in the title of a publication by John Dowland, one of the most celebrated musicians of this period. This was called: “*Lachrimæ; or Seaven Teares figured in seaven passionate Pavans; with divers other Pavans, Galliards, and Almands, set forth for the Lute, Viols, or Violins, in five parts.*” These dances, the pavan, the galliard, etc., are highly characteristic of Shakspeare's time, and merit some description.

The pavan was a slow dance, always in two-quarter time, or at any rate common time, and was so called from “pavo,” a peacock; the significance of the name being that the pavan was a stately measure, and the spreading of the long trains of the ladies, or of the long gowns in which it was danced by noblemen, was like the spreading of the peacock's tail.

It was customary after the slow movement of the pavan to follow it up with the livelier dance known as the galliard. Selden, in his table-talk, complains: “In Queen Elizabeth's time gravity and state were kept up; at a solemn dancing, first you had the grave measures; then the corantos and galliards; and at length to Frenchmore and the cushion-dance.”

It will be interesting to “musical” people to remark here that the succession of movements in a sonata is supposed to be connected with this practice of following up a dance of slow time with one of faster

movement, and the like; an idea which receives support when we think how much of the instrumental music of this time consisted of these dance-tunes, or of what were called "fantasias" upon them.

In the galliard, which thus followed the pavan like a comedy after a tragedy, the dancer would make four steps forward, with the right and left foot alternately, and then spring into the air. This characteristic caper of the dance is mentioned by Shakspeare: in Act I., Scene 3, of "Twelfth Night," Sir Toby is unmercifully quizzing Sir Andrew Aguecheek, who has just been bragging with his usual stupidity upon his marvellous strange delight in "masques and revels;" says Sir Toby,—

"What is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?

"*Sir And.* Faith, I can cut a caper.

"*Sir Toby.* And I can cut the mutton to 't.

"*Sir And.* And I think I have the back-trick simply as strong as any man in Illyria."

A galliard by John Dowland called the "Frog Galliard"—I suppose from this jumping feature, or capriole, as Sir John Davies calls it—became a great favorite in Shakspeare's time, and did duty not only as a dance-tune but as a song, to which words were written. It was, indeed, a common practice then to adapt words to old tunes instead of writing music to words, as is now nearly always done. Butler speaks of the "infinite multitude of ballads with country-dances fitted into them."

Dowland seems from contemporary accounts to have been an agreeable player on the lute, and his work just now mentioned "sets forth" the tunes in it for the lute, as well as for viols, etc. The manner of writing music for the lute was peculiar. The tuning of the instrument (accordatura) was as follows:

Base.	Tenor.	Counter-tenor.	Great mean.	Small mean.	Treble, miniken.
C	: F	: B flat	: d	: g	: Chanterelle, cc.

Each string was represented by a line drawn across the page, making a staff of six lines; and the frets (of which there were eight) were distinguished by letters a, b, c, etc., so that a letter *a* placed on the upper line meant that the finger was to be placed on that string at the first fret, *b* on the next line would mean place the finger on the tenor string at the second fret, and so on. This method of notation was called "tablature," and music for the lute was spoken of as being written "in tablature."

Dowland's pieces, you observe, were also arranged for "viols." These "viols," which have since grown into such commanding importance as the very foundation of the orchestra, were just then begin-

ning their development into the noble instruments of modern times, though no one foresaw those marvellous capacities upon the strings with which we are so familiar.

In these arrangements of Dowland's for viols we begin to see the faint foreshadowing of that enormous development of concerted instrumental music which has resulted in the grand orchestra of modern times and the stupendous works of Haydn and Beethoven and Wagner. There were in those days what were called consorts of music; but aside from these concerted pieces such as Dowland's for viols, and others where the parts of part-songs were played instead of being sung, the main idea in assembling instruments seems to have been simply to make that "loud noise" which has been associated with joy and festivity since, and indeed before, the Psalmist.

I find that Queen Elizabeth had in her pay a number of musicians, playing different instruments; and perhaps I cannot better sum up the bare outline of instrumental music in Shakspeare's time which I have tried to eke out here and there in these articles, than by giving the list of her musicians as they appear upon the royal pay-roll which has been preserved. There were then: "16 Trumpeters, 2 Lutters, 2 Harpers, 2 Singers, 1 Rebeck-player, 6 Sackbuts (the sackbut was a wind instrument with a slide, the progenitor of the modern trombone), 8 'Vyalls,' 1 Bagpipe, 9 'Minstrilles,' 3 Dromslades, 2 Flute-players, 2 Players on the Virginals."

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Three other sorts of dances I cannot omit to mention, though in the briefest way. These were the coranto, or current-traverse, which seems to have been an Italian form of country-dance, somewhat like what we call the reel, where two lines are formed and dancers advance from the ends to meet and execute various figures in the middle; the paspy (i.e., passepied, or pass-foot) or passamezzo, which seems to have been a sort of rapid minuet; and the morris-dance, which is commonly (though, I think, on doubtful grounds) supposed to be a Moorish dance, and to have been brought from Spain.

Laneham, a writer who gives us some minute descriptions of matters in the personal household of Queen Elizabeth, writing in 1590, mentions a "lively Morris-dauns according to the auncient manner; six dauncers, Mawd-Marion and the fool." It seems from other authorities that the morris-dancers followed a leader, guiding their movements by his, somewhat as in the modern "German."

◆

In my first paper I gave you several citations from Shakspeare's plays to show how he not only loved music with sincere passion, but how often he wrote passages which show insight into its mysteries. I cannot better close this account of music in Shakspeare's time than by

quoting a sonnet in which he sends a keen shaft of inquiry into a mysterious matter lying deep in music as in all art. You remember Jessica's saying, "I am never merry when I hear sweet music."

This sonnet advances a little farther and moots the question, why is it, if music makes us sad, that we cultivate it?

Perhaps it has occurred to all to ask why one should go eagerly to see a tragedy on the stage which harrows up your feelings, in apparent opposition to those first principles of ordinary existence which lead us to avoid—instead of seeking—that which gives us pain. Shakspeare, as I said, moots this subtle question in the first part of the sonnet; but he then leaves it, and proceeds to make an argument out of musical concords to induce his young friend to leave his single state and, as it were, make himself a chord, instead of a single tone, by marrying. The first phrase, "Music to hear," is an apostrophe to his friend, equivalent to "O thou whose voice is Music to hear:"

"VIII.

"Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?  
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.  
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly?  
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?  
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,  
By unions married, do offend thine ear,  
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds  
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.  
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,  
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;  
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,  
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:  
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,  
Sings this to thee, 'thou single wilt prove none.'"



And now let us ascend in conclusion to a more general view which goes to the root of the whole matter. From the music of Shakspeare's time let us pass to the music of Shakspeare's life.

Consider for a moment the singular fact that the principle upon which all music depends is the principle of opposition, of antagonism. The least glance at the physical basis of sound will recall this clearly to your minds. Here is a stretched string. As stretched, it is exerting a force in this direction. If I pull it aside—disturb it—cross it, as it were, and trouble it—with a force acting athwart its own direction, it then, and then only, gives forth its proper tone, makes its rightful music. This principle is general throughout the physics of tone. The vibration which produces a musical sound is always set up by two forces, the one acting athwart the other.

Now it is not difficult to carry this idea over from the physical into



the moral world. If it is a fancy, it is certainly not an unprofitable one, that a harmonious life, like a musical tone, comes out of opposition. Between each man and the world about him there is a never-ceasing antagonism. It is an antagonism which results from the very constitution of things. Just so far as I am I, and you are you, so far must we differ; the mysterious course of nature, which so often says "No" to our "Yes," with its death and its pain and its other mysterious phenomena,—this joins with the force of each individual to oppose the force of each other individual. Everywhere there is antagonism, opposition, thwarting. No person who listens at this moment need go out of his own experience for a single day to find it.

Well, then, the problem of life may be said to be to control these moral vibrations which are set up by our troubles and crosses into those ordered beats which give the musical tone, rather than those confused and irregular pulses which result in mere unmusical noise. One man's life is like the mere creaking of a wheel, the binding of a saw, the grinding of bough against bough,—mere unorganized noise; while another man's is like that clear and perfect tone of music which results from regular vibrations produced by two steady forces upon a proper material.

Now I find it delightful to think that our dear Master Shakspeare was one of the musical tones, and that he wrested this music out of the most fearful antagonisms. The loving study of Shakspeare during the last twenty years has developed what seems to me the certainty that about midway of his career some terrible cloud came over his life which for a time darkened his existence with the very blackness of despair.

If we divide his career into three periods we find that to his first period belong "Love's Labor's Lost," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and all the comedies; here, however, in the second period, about 1601-02 and on, we find him writing those murky and bitter tragedies, of "Hamlet," of "Lear," of "Macbeth," of "Timon." His antagonism has come, and has plucked him rudely out of his position.

But at last marvellously he conquers it, and orders it to sweet music. Here in the third period we find him writing "Cymbeline," "Winter's Tale," "Tempest," "Henry VIII.,"—plays all breathing of reunion after absence, of reconciliation, of forgiveness of injuries, of heavenly grace. So he draws his oppositions to harmony; so he converts his antagonisms into ravishing sounds.

Permit me to hope, therefore, that when life shall come to you, as the tutor of Katharine came to her, and shall hand you your lute with frets on it, you will not cry with the Shrew, "Frets call you them? I'll fume with them," but will look upon the frets as simply the conditions of harmony, and will govern your troubles to music.

# A DARK NIGHT'S RIDE

By Owen Hall

*Author of "In the Track of a Storm," "Flotsam," etc.*



IT was Gower who broke the silence which had lasted for several minutes while we lay back in our low chairs and enjoyed our cigars.

"Not a bit of it, Hall," he said; "there isn't a road fit for a bicycle in the district: not one where even you could cover twenty miles under two hours."

"Well," I said lazily, "I mean to try, at any rate. Can you tell me of any place it's twenty miles to from here?"

Gower thought for a second or two. "Yes," he said, "there's Pangali, where MacPherson's in command; that must be nearly twenty miles, and the last part of it's mostly down hill."

Newton sat up and took the cigar from between his lips. "Yes, Gower, and the first part's all up hill. Don't you be fool enough to try it, Hall. That sort of hard work isn't worth tackling unless there's something to be gained by it."

"Is the road pretty solid?" I asked with interest.

"Oh, yes," said Gower, "neither mud nor stones, though, as Newton says, it's a bit too hilly for pleasure; but that's what's the matter with all our roads."

"Of course, I know all about that; but is the track easy to find?"

"You couldn't miss it on a dark night, for that matter, when you're once on it, for the jungle shuts it in on both sides pretty close."

"I should say it did," Newton remarked. "Wasn't it somewhere there they said the tiger got the letter-carrier last week?"

"Yes, I believe so," Gower replied, "but it's ten to one MacPherson has shot him before now."

"Hallo!" said Newton, "what's that?" It was the sound of hasty footsteps coming round the end of the bungalow, and in another second two men made their appearance. One was a sergeant of Newton's company, the other a native, very scantily dressed in a dirty turban, and a waist-cloth drawn tightly around his body and showing a great red stain where the blood from an ugly wound on his shoulder had soaked into it. The sergeant hastily saluted, and spoke a few sentences in an excited tone as he pointed at his companion. I knew too little Hindustani to understand what he said, or the rapid questions and answers that passed between him and Newton, but I caught more than once the word Pangali.

"Anything wrong, Newton?" I asked when they stopped. "That poor beggar looks as if he wanted looking after. What did he say about Pangali?"

"Ah, now, Hall, there's your chance," Gower said, laughing. "If we could only let MacPherson know to-night, we should bag that ruffian Tincum Lal, and rid the province of the most murderous robber within a hundred miles."

"I'm your man!" I exclaimed, looking at Newton.

"Don't be a fool, Gower," he said impatiently. "I only wish it were possible to get word to MacPherson, but I'm afraid we sha'n't manage it. It's absurd to talk about Hall, though perhaps a native might creep through."

"I'll do it, Newton," I said. "If one of these beggars can do it on his feet, I'll bet twenty to one on my wheel."

Newton looked at me, I thought, hesitatingly. "You don't know the risk you would run, man. These ruffians will look out for the road, especially if they suspect this man may have given the alarm. Besides, it will be dark in less than half an hour."

"The very thing!" I exclaimed. "You said one couldn't miss the track; and the darker it is, the better my chance of getting through."

My friend still argued against my idea, but I could see he was very anxious to send word, and I insisted on trying it, till at last he gave way.

"Well," he said, "mind, I don't ask you, Hall; indeed, I'm not sure that I ought to allow it; but if you're determined to risk it, of course it may be of a lot of advantage to us."

"That's all right, Newton," I said; "I'll be ready as soon as I've looked over the bicycle."

"Well," he said reluctantly, "upon my word, Hall, it's awfully good of you to make the offer, but I don't know whether I should accept it after all. Look here, old fellow; you must promise me that if you can see no way of getting past without drawing their fire on you, you will come back."

"Well, yes, Newton. I don't mind promising that. I'm no fonder of getting shot than other people, I can assure you."

"Very well," he said. "I must give some orders, but I'll be back directly and give you a note for MacPherson. You may as well wait till it's quite dark before you start, anyhow."

In half an hour more I was ready. Both Newton and Gower went with me far enough to make sure I was on the right track, and the news had evidently spread, for I could see a knot of the men watching us as we left the bungalow.

"Now, then," Newton said as he grasped my hand, "you won't forget to keep a sharp look-out for these fellows. From what that

man said they ought to be about ten miles from here, just on the other side of the ridge."

I had mounted and started when his voice followed me: "Don't forget you gave me your word to come back if the road was blocked." I glanced backward over my shoulder as I swept into the track, and shouted, "All right, old fellow: I have promised."

Another moment and the dark figures had melted into the shadows, and I was on my way. I threw one searching look around, so as to get my eyes accustomed to the shadowy twilight that still lingered in the air, took a still longer glance at the gray track in front, and put my weight steadily on the pedals. There wasn't much to be seen. To right and left I could make out the dim outlines of trees, rising here and there like sentinels from the darker wall of shrubs and bushes that hedged in the track. In front I could distinguish the lighter color of the road itself, like a gray ribbon stretching away till it was lost in the darkness. The road was dusty, but not deep, and the well-oiled wheels of the bicycle turned with scarcely a sound.

The gray twilight died away and gave place to the soft, velvety darkness of the tropical night. A few stars came out and threw a glimmering light on the scene. A night-breeze sprang up and sighed with a lonely murmur through the trees. I could still make out the faint gray line of the track plainly enough to enable me to keep in the middle of it, but it needed all my attention. It was just as well. When I undertook the expedition I had not stopped to think of all it meant, but now, as I toiled up the long slopes of the winding track, a score of difficulties that might lie before me came into my mind, and nothing but the hard work and the need of constant watchfulness helped me to put them aside. I was in for it, I told myself again and again, and whatever happened I must make the best of it.

Gower hadn't been far wrong about the road after all. If it hadn't been for the breeze, which made itself more felt as the road climbed higher and higher, I should have had to stop more than once on some specially long incline, but as it was I just managed to keep it up with aching limbs. Now and then I got a rest when the track swept down into a hollow or along a comparatively level stretch, but it was hardly a relief, because I felt as if I were losing time and had just so much more of the hill to face. Two hours, Gower had said, and as it came to my memory I could almost have laughed at myself: it seemed as if I must have been toiling up these shadowy slopes a good deal more than that time already.

Almost as the thought was in my mind I could feel that I had gained something like level ground again, and as I peered anxiously into the darkness ahead I could no longer see the shadow of the rising ground beyond me—I had reached the top. The very thought of it

seemed to give me new life, and as I leaned forward my first idea was, now I could make up some for the time I had lost. It was only for a moment, for then I remembered what Newton had said about the place where the robber chief was most likely in possession of the road, and involuntarily I slowed off again. I stared before me into the darkness, but there was nothing to be seen but the vague shadow of the gray track, and though I listened eagerly, I could hear nothing more alarming than the murmur of the night-wind through the trees. My eyes could help me little here; but, after all, it was likely there was nothing to be seen: Tincum Lal and his wild followers might have gone miles away since they fired at the poor fellow who had brought us the news. At any rate, there was nothing to be gained by delay; so, leaning forward once more, I took advantage of the level ground to make up for lost time.

The breeze was stronger now, and as I swept easily along I congratulated myself on having got over the worst part of my journey, and looked forward with satisfaction to the down-hill grade which Gower had said would take me all the way to Pangali. The sky was clear overhead, but it was rather darker on the track than before, for now the road wound among forest trees of large size that threw their branches over it, and every here and there huge boulders and masses of rock cast heavier shadows at their base. It was all I could do to keep the track, which now wound in and out in curves and bends to avoid the rocks and trees; but the motion was easy, and the cool wind was refreshing after my long struggle in mounting the slope.

"But what was that?" It came suddenly, and it seemed to come from below. It echoed and reëchoed among the rocks and trees; but I could not mistake it for anything but the report of a gun. It was something of a shock, I must confess, for I had almost persuaded myself that Newton's warnings had been needless, and that I should have nothing worse to encounter than a dark ride through a rough country. That sound had undeceived me; and involuntarily my feet pressed less heavily on the pedals, while I leaned anxiously forward and strained my eyes in the hope of piercing the shadows that walled me in. In my eagerness it was several moments before I noticed that I was still travelling faster than could be accounted for by any exertion I was making, and even when I observed this it was some seconds more before I had realized what it meant. Then it flashed on me in a moment: I was on the downward slope. In a few minutes more I should reach the spot from which that report had come.

My first impulse was to stop, and I had already made a half motion to do so when a second thought took its place,—“after all, why not go on?” It was no more than I had expected when I had offered to go; it might not be half as dangerous as I had dreamed



of when I started; and, besides, I couldn't go back now. I had promised Newton, of course, but that was only in case I couldn't get through, and how could I tell that unless I tried? I hesitated, but it was only for a moment; after all, there was nothing to be done but to risk it. I let the wheel go.

The track wasn't steep as yet, but the slope was enough to increase my pace, and I was forced to give all my attention to the road. There was no time for thinking, and for the time I felt as if I had become little else but eyes and ears. It is wonderful what you can do at times like these. In spite of the darkness, I seemed able in my excitement to make out each rock and tree, and to follow each curve and bend of the gray track. Suddenly a huge mass of rock rose out of the shadows directly in front of me, and I had no more than time to follow the bend of the road and sweep round its base when I found my eyes almost dazzled by a red glow of light that shone across the track about a hundred yards in front on a somewhat lower level.

For the first moment or two I could make nothing of it, as my eyes had grown so used to the darkness, but then I saw what it meant. The red light was the reflection of a fire somewhere beyond the next bend of the road, and whatever there might be there I couldn't hope to see anything of it till I had passed the corner. I won't say I felt comfortable, but I was past the stage of hesitating now. My wheel was travelling fast, but the thought passed through my mind more quickly still that after all, perhaps, this was as good a chance of getting through as any.

No doubt the robber tribesmen were there,—and at the moment a sound like harsh laughter came to my ears,—but if there was anything to be gained by a surprise it must be all in my favor. Anyhow, I was in for it now, and the only hope of safety lay in rushing it through. I made no attempt to check the wheel, which now went down the slope at racing speed, almost as if it knew. The shadowy trees and black rocks seemed to race past me moment by moment as I drew nearer that belt of light which fell with such startling brilliance across the road, making the forest beyond look blacker still. It couldn't have taken a minute altogether, but it gave me time enough for a hundred thoughts and doubts and hopes and fears; and then, like a flash, my wheel and I swept into the light, while I knit my brows fiercely to see where I was and what was to be done.

The fire was near the edge of the forest in front of a great rock, and there were more than a score of men clustered near it. Farther away, and scattered about on the ground, there might have been a hundred more, and just within the edge of the forest I could make out wagons and oxen. One glance showed me that I had been right about the surprise. I was hardly fifty yards away when I burst



silently and suddenly from the shadow of the rock and came sweeping down the road, which passed within twenty yards of where they stood. I saw the wild start, and heard the short cries of terror with which they greeted the apparition as they fell back with pointing hands and staring eyes from the sight. Another moment and I had swept past like a whirlwind, and I saw before me the spot where the track lost itself once more in the shadows of the forest. Not yet! At that moment a tall figure dressed in white sprang from the ground not fifty yards in front and presented a long gun at me as I came on. "Tincum Lal himself!" The thought struck me like lightning, and almost as quickly I had pulled the revolver from my belt and fired. We must have been within ten yards of each other at the moment, and I seemed to be looking into the barrel of his gun. I thought it trembled. There was a double flash; a mingled report. Something sang past my ear, and next instant I had swept into the shadow of the forest again. I looked over my shoulder as I did so. It was only for an instant, but in that point of time I saw the blazing fire, the group of terrified outlaws, the little cloud of smoke from the gun and pistol,—only the figure of the robber chief had disappeared.

The bicycle rushed on, and in another minute the red flashes of the firelight and the confused cries of the tribesmen had passed completely out of sight and hearing. It took several minutes before my eyes recovered their power of distinguishing anything more definite than giant shadows that flitted past me in the darkness, and longer yet before the hot rush of blood through my veins began to calm down once more. Fortunately, the road was nearly straight for some distance, and gradually the rocks and trees seemed to come out of the confused crowd of shadows as I passed. The track too had grown more level again, and even took a slight upward incline for a few hundred yards, so that by the time I could feel that I was on the down-grade again I could see almost as well as ever.

It had grown lighter too. The forest, which on the upper slopes had overshadowed the road, had grown thin, and the trees were not only smaller but stood farther and still farther apart, and as I went sweeping down the long slope I could see that I was plunging into the rich confusion of plants and shrubs that go to make up the luxuriant jungle of southern India. Clumps of bamboos bent their tall heads to the breeze; tobacco-plants rustled their broad leaves; great masses of tall grass with waving plumes shook and whispered as I passed, and high palms and tree-like ferns swayed softly in the wind.

How did it happen that at that moment Newton's forgotten question and Gower's careless answer flashed back into my memory with a sudden shock: "Wasn't it there the tiger got the letter-carrier last week?" "I believe so; but it's ten to one MacPherson has shot him

before this." I hadn't thought of it once since the words had been carelessly—almost laughingly—spoken, but it was no laughing matter now. The words—the very tones—came to me in the whispering breeze and were echoed by the moving leaves. I felt my blood run cold. This was different from the robbers: yes, and it was worse too. Gower had said the tiger was no doubt shot. But what if he hadn't been? What if at that very moment he was lurking among the jungle. With the thought I felt myself stare wildly into the moving thicket as I rushed past. I could see nothing, to be sure, but I seemed to myself to hear something new. It was no longer the breeze, no longer the swaying leaves and palms—this was different. It was hardly louder, indeed, but it was quicker, more stealthy, more full of deadly purpose. The cold drops broke out on my brow as I threw myself forward and urged the wheel to a more headlong speed.

I must have been going at a racing pace, but that sound followed me still. Sometimes just ahead, then alongside, and then a yard or two behind—but always there. I could distinguish it through every other sound; I could fancy I traced its quick movements in the waving of the grass. On! On! I felt it was a race for life, such as I had never dreamed of. The slope was uniform, and the machine almost flew over the ground, yet it seemed to me to be all but standing still.

The road swept round a bend, and glancing ahead I saw below me, and perhaps half a mile away, the flash of a group of lights—"Pangali!" It was worth while struggling yet. I felt exhausted, but if only I could keep it up a little longer. And now the ground that skirted the road on the right rose almost to a bank, on the top of which the tall grass and bamboos were waving in the wind, and beyond that to a sharp ridge of rocks. If only I could reach the rocks my pursuer would have to go round them, and I felt that I should escape. At that moment I heard a sharp crackling sound like the noise of breaking twigs, and the next—with a sound that was half a snarl and half a roar—something shot out of the thicket on the top of the bank. I don't know what it was like, for I closed my eyes involuntarily and crouched together on my seat, but I do know that something passed just behind me—passed so close that I seemed to feel it brush me as it went, and I heard a crash as it fell among the bushes on the opposite side of the track. I didn't look behind to see; I never raised my head from watching the road in front of my wheel, till suddenly I heard a shout. Then I looked up. An astonished-looking sentinel was staring at me as I raced past him into the parade-ground of the station at Pangali.

I covered the distance in an hour and forty minutes after all. Gower says it was not a fair trial. I don't know about that, but I don't think I shall try it again.

## "MLLE. FOUCHETTE"—A CREATION



**T**AKE a child—a girl—of the provincial French bourgeois manufacturing class; cut her loose from this eminently respectable environment and throw her for five years into the improving atmosphere of a Paris suburb; let her there consort with the criminal patrons of a low cabaret; thrust her out every morning to rummage the waste-heaps with hook and pannier à la chiffonnière, often with but such food as she can glean, maugre dogs, from the garbage-pails along her route,—and as inevitably as two multiplied by two produces four, will such a soul, influenced by such an environment, produce a Fouchette. Fouchette, quick-witted, resourceful, dogged, obstinate, fearing neither person nor thing; hardened to blows, resentful of injury, yet exquisitely sensitive to kindness—the soul and mind of a pagan in the body of a human animal; in two words, a Parisian gamin. “V’la, Monsieur!” as she herself would probably have said, had Mr. Murray introduced her to you in propria persona—“V’la, Monsieur! c’est moi, Fouchette!”

It is at twelve years of age that Fouchette first appears upon the scene in Mr. Murray’s opening chapters, still smarting from her most recent drubbing. But this period of her life serves but to introduce her to the reader, and to show out of what raw material is developed that older Fouchette who justifies Mr. Murray’s selection of a heroine for his convincing and fascinating tale of Bohemian Paris and its denizens.

Considered merely as a diverting tale, without delving into the heart of things to test the metal behind the glittering surface, Mr. Murray’s novel has ample justification, for it deals with those recent days and deeds when all Frenchmen, of whatever shade of political belief, took sides upon the Dreyfus affair, and made it—whether intentionally or unintentionally—the medium of an attack at the very roots of republican government. Here is Paris and the Quartier Latin, with its medley of students and artists and grisettes, its hardships and its reckless gayety. The boulevards and squares are here, in one moment peaceful, bathed in sunshine; the next, alive with mobs of manifestants, who fight with each other over shades of political belief and turn to make a common cause against the police. Here is the infamous police system of omnipresent spies, without which no French government would think itself complete. But it is not all treachery and violence,

for here is the love affair of Jean Marot and Mlle. Remy; and, crowning all, the great, self-sacrificing love of Fouchette. Little bits of domestic life creep in, even though it be only the simple housekeeping arrangements of a student or the room of a grisette. Here is a students' dance in the Place St. Jacques, where the guillotine once stood; here is Paris en fête on Mardi Gras. Thus Paris, the kaleidoscopic Paris we have become accustomed to associate with the name, whirls multicolored before the reader's eyes as Mr. Murray shifts the scenes in developing his plot.

He writes from an evident first-hand knowledge of his subject, betraying an intimate acquaintance with the city and its activities, and with the events he narrates. Curiously at home, too, is he in his depiction of the French character. "The French are half monkey, half tiger," he quotes from Voltaire; and certainly his admirable portrayal of the Parisian populace in general, and of such individuals as Jean Marot and Henri Lerouge in particular, bear out his statement. Those who followed closely the phases of the Dreyfus affair will not be surprised at Mr. Murray's revelations concerning the French character as typified in either of these young men. Jean Marot, who on one day was rioting in the streets and assaulting peaceable citizens, at the head of a mob of students and roughs armed with clubs and canes; who could the next day perpetrate maudlin sentimentality over the beating of a dog, and on the third could sacrifice even such a friend as Fouchette by his besotted selfishness, is to be accepted as but an average sample of the young Frenchman,—an average item which, multiplied by some millions, make up the aggregate population of France. The generalization seems on the face of it to be sweeping and unjust; yet Mr. Murray's narrative is derived, not only from an intimate knowledge of the French as they are at home, but from an actual presence in Paris during the Dreyfus disturbance, and from a personal observation of the doings on the boulevards and in the cafés, from which experiences his description takes its color. Even thus, he has told but a little of what he saw during this time, and the incidents he narrates in private correspondence—incidents of horrible brutality and deliberate murder, which would not be tolerated in a work of fiction—show that if he has erred in his portrayal of the French character, the error has been on the side of mercy.

So much for the novel, as a novel, pure and simple. And if Mr. Murray had done nothing further than give us this picture of the Parisian gamin, he would still have deserved our thanks as well as our congratulations. For, though the seamy side of French life has been exploited ad nauseam, but few writers have touched, even though lightly, upon the field that Victor Hugo made his own; so that "Gavroche" has remained—to the majority of readers, at least—the single outstanding embodiment of the gamin in fiction. It is not to be claimed for one moment, indeed, that Fouchette is to be considered a rival of Gavroche. Mr. Murray himself would be the first to disown any such claim for his creation. But even the best work of the greatest

master may, without loss of dignity, courteously recognize a peer; and it is some such recognition that Gavroche must extend to Fouchette.

But, probing deeper behind the externals of plot and diction, the reader is rewarded by a phase of infinitely greater human interest, and the book becomes to him the recorded biography of a soul,—or, in other words, the tigerish child Fouchette is evolved before his eyes into the mature Fouchette, the self-sacrificing friend of Jean Marot and Mlle. Remy. The germ of this development belongs to her residence in *Le Bon Pasteur*, where she came under the influence of Sister Agnes, one of the nuns; in its final fruits, her voluntary self-effacement in the interest of Jean Marot and Mlle. Remy, it was directly the result of her love for the former, all unworthy as he was. It would be ridiculous to say, after the manner of the callow and enthusiastic reviewer, that fiction affords no finer love-motif than this; such bombast defeats its own purpose and incurs deserved censure. But, when it is considered that through all her eighteen years Fouchette had never really learned a single ethical or moral standard, that all her training had been along the lines of fraud and deceit, in fact; that she loved Jean Marot with that hot, passionate Latin love that brooks no obstacle, the more urgent in that it had never before found an outlet other than Sister Agnes, who could hardly have inspired une grande passion; that she had but to hold her tongue as to facts she knew, and use her influence to estrange Jean still further from his former friend, a course which she might have been expected to consider as natural—when all this is considered, we may say justly that the self-abnegation of Fouchette easily takes rank with other notable examples of self-sacrificing love, and ennobles Jean Marot, as its object, far above his deserts.

A few salient facts concerning this unique character and we have finished, for to attempt to describe such a book is as futile as to put into words the scent of the rose. First to be noted is the unity with which Mr. Murray has conceived his heroine,—though this holds good also of his other characters. The same qualities which the child Fouchette evidenced in the first dozen pages remain with her,—modified, moderated, intensified, what you will, but still the same. It is to the primitive animal instinct of gratitude that the influence of Sister Agnes may be assigned, and the love for Jean Marot had its origin in the same feeling, due to his care of her after she was trampled by the mob. Her other animal instincts, also, her pugnacity, her doggedness, her courage, remained with her throughout her years in *Le Bon Pasteur*, and stood her in good stead in her rough-and-tumble with the world. Finally, and this is particularly to be noted, since it brings to light a new thought in connection with the Parisian grisette, no taint of immorality touched her life; the childish self-respect that refused to beg food, though the body it animated might be starving, matured into a feeling that kept that body free from pollution throughout its life in the world.



So much for the creation. The creator is Mr. Charles Theodore Murray, newspaper correspondent, traveller, and writer.

MR. FRANCIS NEILSON's dramatic tale of the New York Bohemia has the honor of first wearing the new paper cover we have adopted for our *Select Novels*, in which series it is now issued, **Madame Bohemia.** owing to the demand for a cheaper edition. "Madame Bohemia" is emphatically a tale of real life, of life often crude, of life in the rough, with great faults dimming great virtues; of great love, and great sacrifice; of the essential greatness of human nature, in fact, a greatness which develops never so well as in the kindly atmosphere of Bohemia, where a man's worst enemy—often his only enemy—is himself. The reading public is slowly waking to the fact that it is not necessary to go back some generations to find romance in life, and that the language of to-day is as well-fitted to express joy and sorrow, peace, passion, or pain, as was that of the "methinks" period. The reaction from the historical novel dissipation is perfectly natural, inevitable indeed, and has its prototype in the similar reaction that issued in Cervantes's "Don Quixote." Mr. Kipling is quoted as saying, in substance, that the truest historical novel is that which reflects most accurately the life, thought, and customs of the time in which it was written; if that be the case,—and who shall dispute it?—"Madame Bohemia" is, indeed, in the best sense, a historical novel.

IN her latest contribution to current fiction Mrs. Stannard takes a decided leap into the realms of the occult, a tendency that has been foreshadowed by passages in various of her former works, **The Magic Wheel.** notably in "The Career of a Beauty," which we had the pleasure of issuing some few months back. Her title is derived from the line of Theocritus:

*"My magic wheel, draw home to me the man I love."*

Phyllis Marchmont, married to Niel Dering, an officer in the British navy, hears of his death by the sinking of the vessel upon which he is journeying to his station in the West Indies. But a something, possibly a manifestation of her mystic nature, tells her that she can communicate with him again. The manner of establishing this communication forms the fabric of Mrs. Stannard's tale, to which the eventual finding of Niel Dering is a fitting climax; a not uninteresting element of the book is its exposé of the fake clairvoyant and its outspoken defence of the best of the craft, who are, according to the author, entirely honest with their patrons. Not every one may agree with Mrs. Stannard's attitude towards the occult, but every one who reads must perforce admit that she has written a diverting tale.



"No one can study the growth of a great public school, with its struggles,—first for existence, and later for independence and support,—without appreciating how closely it has entered into the life of the people. This history is the outgrowth of a sincere desire to record formally the work and traditions of one of the strong educational influences in the development of Philadelphia. It is offered as a tribute to the long line of honorable and upright men who, under the stimulating leadership of Bache, Hart, Maguire, and Riché, were content to lead the quiet life of the public school teacher. The results of their work are to be found in the careers of their pupils. While in these days no argument for public education is necessary, yet it may be hoped that this account of the work of one school may encourage those who in other places are advocating higher education for all, under the auspices of the State. . . . I have hoped that this record would help the public to understand more fully the aims and ideals with which the 'People's College' was founded, and thus win for the school a more complete appreciation of the value of its work to the community that has supported it with abundant good will." Thus, in part, Mr. Franklin Spencer Edmonds prefaces his history of one of the most notable of Philadelphia's educational factors.

The influence for good that the Central High School has exerted ever since its inception can never be estimated even approximately. It is only by perusing the long list of graduates who have distinguished themselves in science, or art, or commerce, or the professional life, and by calculating the vast sum of these individual activities—a task beyond the mortal mind—that one can gain a faint conception of what such a school can mean to such a city, such a State, such a nation.

Mr. Edmonds has succeeded, in no small degree, however, in his attempt to present a compact summary of the life, spirit, and work of the institution of whose faculty he is a prominent member, and his masterly volume will appeal, not only to those who find in it a biography of their alma mater, but to all who are interested in the rise and progress of public education in the United States.

DR. CARL OPPENHEIMER, of Erlangen, presents in this handy volume a worthy attempt to formulate a comprehensive conception of the notion "ferment" on a dynamic basis. Starting from this stand-point, he regards the theory of ferments as a theoretically closed field of discussion, and has treated the enzymes and organized ferments as a connected whole. Endeavoring to deal as completely as possible with the material to be found in the publications on the subject, he has made such selections from the researches on organized ferments as have a bearing on fermentation as such, and has dealt with the literature on unorganized

**Ferments and  
their Action.**

ferments as fully as possible. He refers to the original publications wherever practicable. The result of his labors is a compact volume of considerably over three hundred pages, comprising twenty-four chapters and a systematic bibliography. Mr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell is the translator.

THE second volume of the "Temple Bible," publication of which was commenced about six weeks ago, now issues from the press, under the editorial signature of A. R. S. Kennedy, D.D.,  
**Exodus.** who has made a close study of Exodus. As has been stated before, in the extended review upon the series as a whole, the Temple edition is prepared from the literary stand-point and in literary form, the text of the Authorized Version being followed. The present volume is in the style adopted for the series, and is furnished with a photogravure of Millais's well-known picture, "Victory, O Lord!"

# WILD OATS

BY

FRANCIS WILLING WHARTON

AUTHOR OF "A MOABITISH WOMAN,"  
"MRS. EVANS'S LAST SENSATION,"  
"THE STORY OF ANNABEL LEA," ETC.



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